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NATAWISTA IKSANA

—Sketch by Paul Ferryman

THE MAJOR'S LADY: NATAWISTA

By Mildred Walker Schemm

Back in the 1860's the good people of Peoria, Illinois were astonished to see a Blackfoot Indian tepee pitched on the lawn of one of the show-places of the town. The property belonged to Major Alexander Culbertson, a former fur-trader, and Major Culbertson's wife was the daughter of a Blood chief. For most of the year Mrs. Culbertson came and went as a civilized gentlewoman. Her clothes were of the finest materials and in the latest style, and anyone seeing her with one of her daughters from the Moravian Seminary in Pennsylvania would have thought her completely civilized. But when Indian summer came, the Major's lady, born Natawista Iksana, Sacred Snake woman, shed the many ruffled skirts and corset and tucked chemise, the heeled leather boots with fancy stitching, the gloves and bonnet and calash she wore with such grace, and clothed herself once more in the single garment of fine buckskin, ornamented with dyed porcupine quills. She walked out of the mansion Major Culbertson had built with the fortune he had made in the fur trade, away from the heavy carpets and lace curtains and carved walnut furniture and returned to the simple freedom of a tepee on her own front lawn. She paid no attention to the carriages driving ever so slowly beyond the shrubbery and the fancy picket fence, nor to the faces peering out of the carriages. It was cool in the tepee on those breathless Illinois days and she could remember the mountains and the prairie and the streams running down from the glaciers.

Natawista was no mere Indian squaw taken by a white man as a poor substitute for a woman of his own race, but, for once, a person of that great charm, dignity and beauty which the writers of romantic fiction and the makers of movies always ascribe to their fictitious Indian heroines.

There is a picture of her in which she looks out above her prim white collar, fastened with its brooch, with a stolid, enigmatic gaze that entirely conceals and wild flash of her eyes or curve of laughter on her straight-lined mouth.¹ Her black hair, parted in the middle and combed into two braids lankly borders her face. It is difficult to conjure up any hint of beauty or esti-

¹ Historical Society of Montana Contributions, Vol. X, 1940, 8.

mate her charm from that picture, but both beauty and charm must have been there for hardly a visitor to Fort Union or Fort Benton in those days refrained from writing in his journal about Major Culbertson's lady.

One visitor, Rudolph Friederich Kurz, a young Swiss artist, wrote in 1851: "If Mr. Culbertson's Indian wife had not received news of her younger brother's having been shot by the Assiniboin, I should have had a chance to study one of the most beautiful Indian women. In token of her grief she had her long lustrous black hair cut short. She would be an excellent model for a Venus, ideal woman of the primitive race; a perfect 'little wife.'"²

Major Culbertson first saw Natawista in 1840 when she came down from Canada with her father, Chief Men-Es-To-Kos, to trade at Fort Union on the mouth of the Yellowstone river. The bright-eyed young Indian girl attracted him at once and he sent an **engage** with nine horses to tie to her eldest brother's lodge and ask him for the girl. The next day the chief's daughter was sent to him with nine horses in exchange for those he had given.³ And after the proper speeches and smoking of pipes, Natawista's people went back to Canada, satisfied, and she became Major Culbertson's wife by proper Indian standards. She was about fifteen at the time of her marriage; he was thirty. He had had one Indian wife before and two children by her whom he educated in the east. But Natawista was always accorded honor and respect by all of Culbertson's friends and associates. She and her husband were seldom separated for more than a few days for the next thirty years.

Culbertson had succeeded McKenzie as head of Fort Union and was already widely known among the tribes for his fair dealing. Father de Smet described him as "a distinguished man endowed with a mild, benevolent and charitable temper, though if need be intrepid and courageous."⁴ Perhaps more important in the eyes of his Indian wife, his skill as a horseman and buffalo hunter was greater than that of any other white man of his time and of most of the Indian braves.

Natawista seems to have taken her place as the first lady of Fort Union with grace and ease and assumed the ways of civilized

² "Journal of Rudolph Friedrich Kurz," *Bureau of American Ethnology, Bulletin* 115, (Nov. 6, 1851) 224.

³ *Journal of Lewis H. Morgan*, 1862, No. 2, p. 20. Ms. Historical Society of Montana. (Photostat)

⁴ *Historical Society of Montana Contributions*, Vol. X, 242.

living. When she journeyed with her husband back to St. Louis to the head office of the fur company or visited at the home of Mr. Pierre Chouteau, her bright black eyes were quick to take in the manners and styles. She had an instinctive taste in the matter of dress and ornament. (In jewelry she was fond of rubies and emeralds but found diamonds no more exciting than snowflakes or drops of water). She never learned, or perhaps never chose, to speak English although she could understand it. Her husband spoke all the Indian dialects and the French patois of the fur trade so they had no need for another language. One passenger on a Missouri steamboat in 1859 wrote of meeting Mrs. Culbertson "dressed as a white lady and said to be a very fine woman." And he adds, as though disappointed, "I have been introduced to her but as she cannot speak English I can say nothing to her!"*

So well did she take upon herself the ways of white women that Governor Stevens was greatly impressed. He wrote in 1853, "Mrs. Culbertson, who had fully adopted the manner, costume and deportment of the whites, by her refinement presents the most striking illustration of the high civilization which these tribes of the interior are capable of attaining."*

The young minister, Reverend Elkanah Mackey, who was discouraged before he began his task of making good Presbyterians out of the Indians, wrote gravely in a letter to his Board in 1856: "I think she (Mrs. Culbertson) is a very remarkable woman...her influence on Mr. Culbertson seems to be of the most favorable kind."*

But it is in the journal kept by John James Audubon when he stayed at Fort Union in 1843 that we can see Natawista most vividly. At the same time, we catch a glimpse of the verve and gaiety as well as the primitive simplicity of life in a fur-trading post in the western wilderness. Audubon had come up the Missouri in search of animals to paint for his collection of American quadrupeds, and Fort Union was a natural vantage point.

When Audubon stepped off the boat in that vast empty country, Major Culbertson and some of the men from the fort came down on horseback to meet him. They dismounted and

*"Journal of Elias J. Marsh," *South Dakota Historical Review*, Vol. 1, No. 2, Jan. 1936, 100.

*U. S. Cong. 33:2 S. D. 86, 403. Rept. of Gov. I. I. Stevens on Expedition of 1853.

*Letter Fort Union, July 22, 1856 from Rev. E. D. Mackey to Walter Lowrie. *Journal of Department of History*, Dec. 1941, Presb. Hist. Society, 337.

escorted him across the prairie to the most impressive of the Missouri trading posts. His host, and perhaps, his host's lady, brought out glasses of "first-rate port wine." Audubon had only a dark little room with one small window and a bed of buffalo skins but it was the same room in which Prince Maximillian de Neuwied had spent two months some years before. Distinguished guests were not uncommon in this wilderness fort.

Audubon and his companions had retired early that first night in the fort when they heard music below and an invitation was sent up to them to come down to a ball in the dining-room, a room which boasted wall-paper and framed pictures! "There was no alternative; we all got up, and in a short time were amid the **beau monde** of these parts. Several squaws, attired in their best, were present, with all the guests, **engages**, clerks, etc. Mr. Culbertson played the fiddle very fairly, Mr. Gueppe the clarinet, and Mr. Chouteau the drum, as if brought up in the army of the great Napoleon. Cotillions and reels were danced with much energy and apparent enjoyment, and the company dispersed about one o'clock." ⁸ Natawista's life in the fort did not lack for gaiety.

The Culbertsons were at pains to entertain their guest and give him a taste of the country, much in the manner of westerners at the present time. One day, they put on a sham buffalo hunt, another day, everyone dressed in Indian garb and Mrs. Culbertson painted Audubon's young companion "in an awful manner," like a Blood brave. She, herself, put on her own "superb dress." Audubon's admiration shows through his words:

The Ladies had their hair loose and flying in the breeze and then mounted on horses with Indian saddles and trappings. Mrs. Culbertson and her maid rode astride like men and all rode a furious race, under whip the whole way, for more than a mile on the prairie; how amazed would have been any European lady, or some of our modern belles who boast their equestrian skill, at seeing the magnificent riding of this Indian princess, for that is Mrs. Culbertson's rank. Mr. Culbertson rode with them, the horses running as if wild, with these extraordinary Indian riders, Mrs. Culbertson's magnificent black hair floating like a banner behind her.⁹

Audubon was interested in every new bird and animal on the prairie, "the little new lark," the lazuli finches, plovers, arctic bluebirds, the western deer and the antelope, but in none of these

⁸ Maria R. Audubon, *Audubon and His Journals* (New York, 1900) in two volumes, II, 35.

⁹ *Ibid.*, Vol. II, 88-89.

perhaps more than his young hostess who was a new species of woman to him.

And he was equally new to her. He went hunting, but he brought his prey home to paint! He looked at the claws of the beaver as though he had never seen anything like them before, and stroked the fur of a white wolf pelt as though it were more valuable than a blanket. He was an artist and she never tired of watching pictures grow beneath his brush. He was interested in woman-things; she made him a necklace of red berries and he fingered it like a squaw and admired the parfleche she decorated with dyed porcupine quills. He was French, but she had known French voyageurs and clerks and traders and he was different from all these. When she looked up she often found him studying her. What she thought of him there is no way of knowing except that one day she dove into the Missouri river and brought back six mallard ducks as a gift for him.¹⁰

Audubon was delighted. She, herself, must have been very like the lovely wild water-fowl, swimming under water like a silent shadow, then cutting the surface with her dark head and raised brown arm and climbing up on the shore to dry.

He noted with pleasure all the little domestic things she did: "After a good dinner of Buffalo meat, green peas (from the Fort garden) and a pudding . . . we had an arrival of five squaws who came to see our fort and our ladies. The princess went out to meet them, covered with a fine shawl, and the visitors followed her to her room. These ladies spoke both the French and Cree languages."¹¹

But Audubon is repelled to discover savage traits in his hostess. He writes: "I lost the head of my first buffalo bull because I forgot to tell Mrs. Culbertson that I wished to save it, and the princess had its skull broken open to enjoy its brains. Handsome and really courteous and refined in many ways, I cannot reconcile myself to the fact that she partakes of raw animal food with such relish."¹²

Father Point, a priest who lived at the fort for some time, like Audubon was disappointed to find the Major's lady clinging to the primitive superstitions of her tribe after he had thought her completely Christianized and had baptized one at least of her children. When her child was sick with croup and the white man's remedies had done no good, she persuaded her husband

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, Vol. II, 112.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, Vol. II, 123.

¹² *Ibid.*, Vol. II, 111.

to call in an old Blood squaw. The old crone heated rocks and poured water on them to give the child a steam bath, all the time chanting in a monotonous sing-song the lament that was part of the cure. When the heathen chant reached the priest's ears he tried to throw the old woman out of the fort but Culbertson intervened. Natawista was stubborn about certain things and, a miracle, the child was breathing quietly!"

In 1845 Culbertson moved up the Missouri to build a fort above what had been old Fort McKenzie to tap that vast wilderness, rich in furs, farther west. In 1847, he moved the fort again to a point that was more advantageous for trading and built the walls of adobe. On Christmas night, 1850, a ball was given to celebrate the completion of the Culbertsons' house inside the stockade.

Music reached the banks of the Missouri that was never quite black, even at night, but it could carry only a little way across the wind-swept prairie before it was lost in space. Inside, the big room of the fort was warm with a fire on the hearth and the heat of a hundred or more living bodies swaying, jigging, stamping to the music. Perhaps the Major was not playing the fiddle that night, but dancing with his lithe little wife. Her hair may have been in braids, but her full red silk skirt had come from St. Louis and on her buttoned bodice hung a silver cross.

There was punch for all, for Natawista's relatives, for the young army officers, the clerks and the interpreter, the hunters who had brought in the game for the Christmas feast, and a dram apiece of liquor for the *engages* and the Indians. There was laughter and the start of a Voyageur's song in French mixing with the music; then the fiddler tapped his bow and the Major raised his hand and the room hushed. The Indian squaws looked to their husbands to know what the white chief said and their husbands interpreted: The fort was henceforth to be called Fort Benton. Hands clapped, then the music began again and the Major swung his lady and the long, lonesome range of the Highlands looked coldly down on the prick of light on the bank of the Missouri.²³

For the next ten years, Major Culbertson made Fort Benton his headquarters. It came to surpass Fort Union in importance in the fur trade. The Blackfeet and the Piegans and Bloods and Gros Ventres brought their bales of beaver skins in peace and

²³ Historical Society of Montana Contributions, Vol. III, 249.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, 264.

trust. So heavy was the trading that by spring even the bedding and the cutlery from the fort kitchen went in barter and the boats sailed down the Missouri piled high with the winter's rich take. In St. Louis and even as far away as the capital at Washington, Culbertson was famed as the man who knew Indians and could smooth out any difficulty and bring back trade where it had fallen off, but who shall say how much of his success was due to Natawista?

When the Governor of Washington Territory, I. I. Stevens, set out to survey a rout for the Pacific railroad that would go through the country of the treacherous Blackfoot, he had Major Culbertson appointed as special agent to treat with the Indians, and he wrote in his report to the Secretary of the Interior: "I placed the more reliance upon the favorable influence which Mr. Culbertson might exert upon the Indians as he had married a full-blooded Blackfoot Woman."

Governor Stevens had not thought of actually taking Mrs. Culbertson with them on the expedition, but she insisted, saying to her husband: "My people are a good people, but they are jealous and vindictive. I am afraid that they and the whites will not understand each other; but if I go, I may be able to explain things to them. I know there is danger, but, my husband, where you go I will go, and where you die, I will die."

When they camped for the night, the Culbertsons' tent was always pitched outside the line of sentinels so the Indians could come freely to talk with Natawista. Stevens writes: "I soon perceived the advantage to be derived from Mrs. Culbertson's presence. She was in constant intercourse with the Indians, and inspired them with perfect confidence.... She heard all that the Indians said and reported it through her husband to me." He was amazed to hear the squaws shrieking with laughter around Natawista's tent and discovered that she was regaling them with tales and descriptions of the white ladies of St. Louis. He concluded that it was a mistake to think of the Indian as "silent and unsociable." "Mrs. Culbertson... rendered the highest service to the expedition, a service which demands this public acknowledgement," he puts down formally in the record. So Natawista helped to open the way for the railroad and the coming of the white settlers who would some day push her people onto reservations."

¹⁵ U. S. Cong. 33.2, S. D. 86, 404. Report of Governor I. I. Stevens on Expedition of 1853.

Natawista had five children, these bearing the old-fashioned Christian names of Jack, Nancy, Julia, Fanny and Joe. When the second child was drowned in the Missouri, the Major sent the others back east to be raised in convent and military schools or by his maiden sister in Illinois. But each year he and Mrs. Culbertson went back to see them.

The Major's lady was always with her husband, traveling thousands of miles between forts and Indian camps. Some expeditions to the Indian camps she made alone. There are notes in the diary of the Fort Benton clerk of outfitting a wagon "for Mrs. C" or of "Mrs. C's return." Whenever the Culbertsons arrived back at the fort after an absence, it was a signal for rejoicing. The clerk's diary reads: "September 1854, About noon, much to the delight of all in the Fort, Mr. Culbertson, Lady, and three men arrived from Fort Union. Received him with a proper salute..." And the next day, "Mrs. Culbertson gave the men a feast and in the evening a ball..."

There is an almost medieval flavor about this life they lived, and their cavalcades winding across the prairie toward the fort, sometimes in the shade of the cottonwood trees along the river, are not unlike those parties on gaily caparisoned horses that passed through the oak forests in England or France toward some moated gray castle.

The Major and his lady went up and down the river by mackinaw, or keelboat, or steamboat. For miles upon miles, sometimes weeks at a time, there was no sign of a habitation along the river, only buffalo, or a wolf, or a magpie flashing across the immense sky, flying its pirate flag of black and white. Yet in this land of unmeasured space they seem never to have been impressed by the isolation or danger or loneliness. Those were the good years of their lives.

By 1858, Major Culbertson had amassed a fortune of some three hundred thousand dollars. He retired from the active management of the trade in the Upper Missouri country and settled on his estate outside Peoria, Illinois. A new and hilarious chapter began for Natawista.

A nine-room mansion with sharp gables, trimmed with a scalloped border, was built for the Culbertson family. No expense was spared in furnishing it: a magnificent pier glass hung in the hall and the walls of the drawing-room were decorated with original paintings by Stanley. One of them, painted to order, used

¹⁰ Historical Society of Montana Contributions, Vol. X, 243.

Natawista as a model. An English gardener was imported to lay out the three hundred acres surrounding the house, and it is safe to guess that he must have been daunted by the corral on the property, stocked with antelope, elk and even panting buffalo, brought down from the upper Missouri. There were stables with the finest carriage horses that took blue ribbons in the horse-shows at Cincinnati, and the estate was staffed with servants and stablemen.

In his new role as an established country gentleman, Major Culbertson bethought himself of his Indian marriage, or, perhaps, gossip was rife among the citizens of Peoria. At any rate, the Peoria **Daily Transcript** for September 12, 1859, carried the account of a marriage,

...Performed in this county on Friday last (Sept. 9, 1859).

The parties were Major Alexander Culbertson and Natawista, daughter of the Chief of the Blackfeet Indians, Major Culbertson is the well-known Indian trader and was married to his present wife according to the Indian ceremony some sixteen or seventeen years ago, but having lately severed his connection with the American Fur Company and settled down to an agricultural life near this city, he was anxious that the ceremony be performed according to civilized rites. The parties have three [5] very interesting children, the eldest of whom is about fifteen years of age. The marriage was performed after the ceremony of the Catholic Church by Father Scanlon of St. Joseph, Missouri.

By 1860 Peoria citizens were fond of driving their guests out past Locust Grove, which was the name of the Culbertsons' estate, telling them stories of the amazing family who lived there; of Jack taking a goat into the house to butt his reflection in the lovely pier glass, or of his riding his horse right up those front steps into the parlor; how the cook said there were barrels of gold coins in the cellar, though there were rumors that the Major didn't pay his bills promptly!

Such reckless extravagance had never before been seen or heard of in Peoria, and people told over and over how Mrs. Culbertson had the coachman hitch two half-broken colts to a brand-new carriage that cost not a penny less than three hundred dollars and when they ran away and smashed the carriage to smithereens, she just stood there laughing and clapping her hands as though it were the best joke in the world! Some folks said Mrs. Culbertson was fond of fire-water... this bit always accompanied by significant raising of eyebrows and the word "Indian" shaped by the lips.

Then, as suddenly as it began, the hilarious, musical comedy chapter was over. It turned into something not quite tragedy. Major Culbertson had invested his money unwisely in projects promoted by his good friend Senator Thomas Benton of Missouri, for whom he had named the fort. His family had spent recklessly and the fortune was gone. The barrels in the cellar stood upended.

In the fall of 1869 thirty-three creditors filed claims against the property, but the Major and his wife had already gone back up the Missouri. Major Culbertson must have been glad many times in his life that he had an Indian wife; when he saw the young missionary's white wife, who was overwhelmed with homesickness and horror at the loneliness of life at Fort Benton, take to her bed weeping until her husband promised to take her back to the States before winter; when Natawista traveled with him all day across the endless prairie with the cold wind blowing against them and, still unwearied at the day's end, was ready to make their beds and cook the wild meat she had often shot herself, or when Natawista rode as furiously as he in pursuit of a wolf for the sheer joy of the chase.

But, perhaps he was never more thankful than now to have an Indian wife who would not reproach him for his bankruptcy, nor cry for her vanished luxuries and ease, nor feel abused nor martyred. Sitting quietly in the boat going up the Missouri, her eyes watched for old landmarks and she could have had few regrets for the life in Peoria.

Yet things had changed on the upper Missouri in those ten years. Fort Benton was now the only post owned by the Chouteau firm and the business was no longer trade with the Indians but a transportation and merchandise business with the white settlers pushing into the new country.

Still, a man like Major Culbertson, even though he had turned sixty, and sixty is old on the frontier, was always valuable in the Indian country. He could make some money trading with the Indians on his own and acting as interpreter at the various Indian agencies. A come-down for a man who had been a feudal lord in that country, but one who had lived so long in the wilderness had few material needs and his dignity needed nothing to bolster it, it was inherent in himself.

And Natawista? Our sense of the brave ending would be pleased if we could say that she was faithful to her husband all the years of his life, dying where he died as she had vowed to do on Governor Stevens' expedition, but that is not the way the hu-

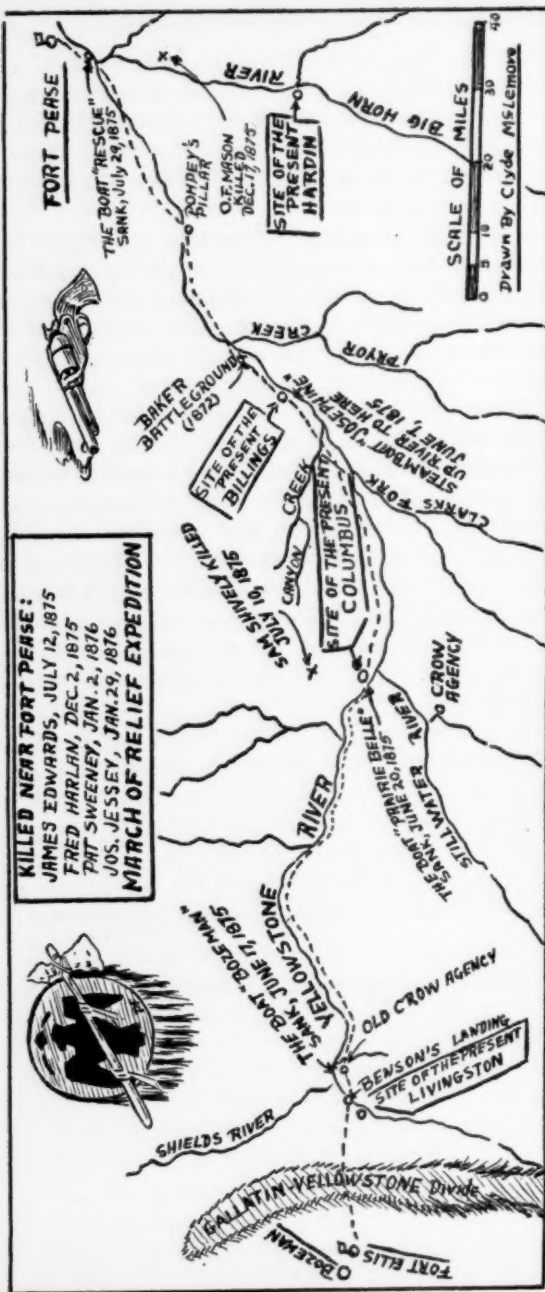
man record reads. Her daughters were in the east; they were to live all their lives as educated white women, marrying white men. Her sons found work around the forts, content with a life that was half-Indian, half white. She stayed at Fort Benton awhile, since her name is on the census for 1870; then she left the Major and went her own way.

We can only speculate about the motivations of her actions. She kept no diaries. Within a year or two of her leaving Fort Benton she, who had lived so well in a white man's world, turned her back on it and went north to Canada. The simple fact is moving. She had been away a long time and she chose to go back to her own people.

Major Culbertson was roving the country, trading with the Indians, even up into Canada. They may have met again on the Blood reserve, the old fur-trader and the still beautiful Indian woman who was his wife. Just before his death, Culbertson went back to visit his daughter, and in '79 died at Julia's home in Nebraska. Natawista lived on the Blood reserve in Canada until her death, but she could never step back completely into the old Indian ways, for she was always known by her married name of Madame Culbertson. She died in the '90s and was buried in the Indian cemetery near the Catholic Mission, northeast of Stand-off on the road to Cardston."

The story of the Major's Lady has the beauty and strength of a legend, the strange mystery of an Indian ceremony and the disappointment of the cheap Indian wares bought in a tourist shop, but it has its own unique place in the history of Montana. Every school child in the state knows the story of Sacajawea but hardly a one has ever heard of Natawista, yet she, too, helped the white men in their trail-making and she is a woman worthy of a legend.

" Culbertson File. Manuscript collection. Historical Society of Montana.



FORT PEASE
THE FIRST ATTEMPTED SETTLEMENT IN YELLOWSTONE
VALLEY

By Clyde McLemore

I.

This is the story of the first attempt by white men to establish a permanent settlement in the Yellowstone Valley. It is the story of Fort Pease and of the traders, trappers and hunters identified with its brief but eventful existence.

To the leaders and their associates the project seemed both sound and expedient. The national park, established three years before, was beginning to attract tourists. A route up the Yellowstone would tend to increase their number. The expedition by 150 men from Bozeman in 1874 had demonstrated that a good wagon road could be made, at least as far down as they went—to the mouth of the Rosebud, east of the Big Horn. Furthermore, steamboats certainly would soon be navigating the river; indeed, it was well known that Captain Grant Marsh that season, 1875, was bringing the **Josephine** up the river.

A frontier settlement, fort and trading post at the probable head of navigation should prove practical as well as profitable. Considerations of immediate importance were these: first, it would be in a region abounding in game and peltries; and, second, there should be a lucrative trade with the Crow Indians, whose reservation lay on the south side of the river. Therefore, on the north side of the river and upon the first suitable bottom east of the mouth of the Big Horn, the fort should be built.

It was with true vision that the settlement of Montana's most extensive valley was foreseen; but one factor was not sufficiently considered or at least its importance was minimized, namely, the possible presence of hostile Sioux Indians in such numbers and proximity as to defeat the project. It was known that the region was frequented by the Sioux. Had they not turned back Major Eugene M. Baker in an engagement opposite and two or three miles above the mouth of Pryor creek at the present town of Huntley in August, 1872? Had they not a year later fought Col. D. S. Stanley and Lieut. Col. George A. Custer opposite the mouth of the Tongue river near the present Miles City and again

a week later opposite the mouth of the Big Horn? Had not the civilian expedition from Bozeman, in the summer of 1874, four times fought them south of the Yellowstone and east of the Big Horn? And had not the Crows at their agency, only 35 miles east of Bozeman, earnestly and repeatedly complained to the representatives of the Great Father in Washington that their choicest hunting grounds to the east were being invaded by large numbers of Sioux?

But those were days in Montana when for the greater part men were adventurers. They took chances. Young and unattached, they reckoned but little with physical discomfort and danger. With equal sang-froid they staked their fluctuating fortunes and their lives on a chance of desired rewards.

II.

The leaders in the Fort Pease enterprise were Fellows D. Pease,¹ Paulinas W. McCormick,² and Zadok H. Daniels.³ Pease was the prime mover. Twenty-five of his then forty years had been lived on the frontier. Born in Pennsylvania, he had moved with his parents to New York state in his tenth year, and later to Wisconsin. There, while still in his teens, he had engaged in trade with the Chippewa Indians. As a lad of nineteen he was employed in the survey of the Wisconsin-Minnesota boundary, and the following year was associated with a veteran Indian trader. Joining the military in his 21st year he had a part in suppressing Indian troubles on Minnesota's western front. In 1861 he came up the Missouri river, a responsible employee of a fur trading concern. The commissioner of Indian affairs in 1867

¹ Pease had been resident agent of the Crow Indians, September, 1870, to July, 1873. Following the Fort Pease venture he engaged in mining at Cooke City and later in the coal business at Livingston. He was a delegate from the then Gallatin county to the second constitutional convention of the Territory of Montana at Helena, January 14 to February 9, 1884. His death occurred at Medford, Oregon, October 21, 1920.

² After the evacuation of Fort Pease, McCormick became sutler in the field of General Gibbon's Montana Column in the Sitting Bull Campaign, and that fall began merchandising at the Tongue River Cantonment. He moved off the military reservation to Miles City when that town started, and later removed to Junction City, opposite and four miles above the mouth of the Big Horn, and finally in 1891 located in Billings where for many years he was active in business and the livestock industry. He died at Billings, January 26, 1921.

³ Daniels was with the command of Lieut. Col. Elmer S. Otis at the encounter with Sitting Bull west of Glendive in October 1876. From 1883 to 1894 he resided at Cooke City in the New World mining region. For a time he was a deputy sheriff of Park county, was county assessor for six years and after an interval was again elected to that office, in which he was serving at the time of his death, March 8, 1910.

appointed him as a special Indian agent and three years later made him resident agent to the Crows, whose agency was located on the south side of the Yellowstone ten miles east of the present Livingston. Since the termination of that service he had been ranching on the river thirty miles above the agency, in the general vicinity of the present Chico, in Park county.

McCormick, in his 21st year in 1866, with better than the average formal schooling, had come from his native state, New York, directly to Montana, settling in the Gallatin valley where he engaged in farming and freighting. He had seen something of the rough life in the winter of 1867-1870 when, as a contractor of transportation, he accompanied the expedition of Maj. E. M. Baker, from Fort Ellis, three miles east of Bozeman, to a point on the Marias river 90 to 100 miles northwest of the present Great Falls where Baker exterminated a village of Piegan Indians.

Daniels, the youngest of the three promoters, was but 25, though he had learned much of business from several years of experience. He was born in Pennsylvania. In his 13th year, with his parents, he removed to Port Huron, Michigan, where he obtained employment as a clerk in a merchandise establishment for six years. Terminating that employment he came to Bozeman in 1870. For some time he worked in the sutler's store at Fort Ellis, but more lately had been engaged as superintendent of farming at Crow agency.

To the three leaders the business possibilities of the enterprise, the trading and merchandising feature of it, were more attractive than the hunting and trapping vocation, which appealed to most of their associates.

III.

From his ranch, on Saturday morning, June 5th, 1875, Pease and six of the adventurers floated and steered a flatboat twenty miles down the river, transporting 4000 feet of lumber. Tied up at the Crossing, or Benson's Landing, about two miles below the present Livingston, they set about making two additional boats and otherwise preparing for the arrival of the main party from Bozeman. Eleven days later that group came, bringing wagons, horses, arms, ammunition and equipment. They brought also a small cannon called, almost affectionately, the Big Horn Gun, because it had been brought to Bozeman in the fall of 1870 by a party of prospectors from Cheyenne, Wyoming, known as the Big Horn Prospecting Expedition, and because it had been used effectively against the Sioux in the Big Horn country in 1874 by the Yellowstone expedition from Bozeman.

There was much to talk about the steamer **Josephine**. They would not see her, as they had hoped to do, for she had come and gone. This information came from Tom LaForge and John Souci. The Crow agent, Dexter E. Clapp, had sent them on a mission to the Crow camp far to the east. On the sixth of that month, they reported, they had contacted the steamer six miles below the mouth of Canyon creek. As guests of Captain Grant Marsh they had dinner on board. Immediately upon receiving the news on the 15th, the Bozeman **Avant Courier** had issued an extra; and that day the Fort Pease outfit left town for the rendezvous at the landing.

A meeting resulted in formal election of Pease as "chief" and McCormick and Daniels, "under officers." The two other boats were completed, and the three were named the **Bozeman**, the **Maggie Hoppy**, and the **Prairie Belle**. At the first pink glow of dawn, June 17th, the camp was astir. Pease made a rousing speech. The boats and their crews were made ready. The cannon on the flagship **Bozeman** was fired, the hawsers were loosed and at 5:25 o'clock the little fleet swung into the current, while the land party set out toward the east. All would meet at the mouth of the Stillwater.

In the **Bozeman** were Pease, J. H. Peek, commander, and five others.⁴ Nelson Weaver was in command of the **Maggie Hoppy**, with Daniels and five others aboard.⁵ The **Prairie Belle** was commanded by James Crane, with whom were McCormick and three others.⁶ The land party included William Brockway and 16 others,⁷ making a total of 37 men—20 in the three boats and 17 proceeding overland.

In just 35 minutes, as the little fleet was passing the Crow agency ten miles below Benson's Landing, the flagship struck a snag and soon came to rest on the bottom of the river. Those aboard managed to save themselves, but much of the cargo was lost, and all of it damaged. It required the remainder of that day to salvage the boat and mend it, raise and put aboard the cannon and such of the goods, arms and equipment as could be found and recovered. A trunk full of personal belongings of Pease was

⁴ Elias (Blacky) Carter, N. J. Cunningham, Duncan McRae, Wm. Page, and Edward Burke.

⁵ Wesley Millikin, George Herendeen, J. T. Ford, John (Jack) McKenzie, Tyler McClees, and Charles Fisher.

⁶ Louis Coulfield, A. D. Lutes, and I. J. Allen.

⁷ Among those in the land party were Sam Shively, James Edwards, Taylor Bliven, E. S. Terrill, Charles P. Jones, Fred McLean, Kiernan Murray, Jerry (Garry) Burke, and Fred Hoelin (Harlan?).

lost, as was a chest of tools belonging to Page. Only three guns were recovered. Patrick Hyde, from the agency, now joined the party.

A similar misfortune befell the **Prairie Belle** at ten o'clock on the morning of the 20th, as the fleet was approaching the mouth of the Stillwater. The boat was repaired and as much of the cargo as possible was salvaged. An abandoned boat found there was added to their fleet. The following day the land party came in; and all were off again.

Three days later, the 24th, the boats were brought to a suitable landing on the north bank of the river three miles below the mouth of the Big Horn. The site selected for their stockade was down the valley three miles further. Even as they approached they saw upon the bluffs not more than a mile distant a band of Indians watching them. Without the loss of any time all hands busied themselves with bringing down the cargoes, preparing to build the stockade, cutting wood and doing other necessary work. When finally completed, the fort was 100 feet square, with bastions on the northeast and southwest corners. Inside were built six log houses, with outside walls forming part of the stockade; four of these were 17 x 16 feet, and two were 20 x 12 feet. The national flag was unfurled, and the cannon was placed in one of the bastions.

Four days after the landing, the work being fairly under-way, and perhaps, after the arrival of the land party, Pease, J. H. Peck and George Herendeen bade goodbye to the party and started down the river in a boat. Five days later they arrived safely at Fort Buford, at the mouth of the Yellowstone. There Pease obtained passage on the steamer **Key West** to Bismarek, where he boarded the train for the east. July 11th, at St. Paul, he wrote a letter to C. W. Hoffman, sutler at Fort Ellis, three miles east of Bozeman, in which he stated that after visiting Chicago, New York and points in Pennsylvania, he would return to Bozeman. Herendeen remained at Fort Buford until he was able to obtain passage on a steamer up the Missouri as far as Carroll, forty miles above the mouth of the Musselshell. From that point he went to Helena and later to Bozeman and on down the Yellowstone again, to Baker Battle Ground, where he made his headquarters during the winter. No further mention of Peck has been found; and it may be supposed he remained on the Missouri.

Leaving 22 men at the fort, Sam Shively, Nelson Weaver and Patrick Hyde, taking four horses and a mule, set out on the night

of July 5th to return to Bozeman, 230 miles. While en route in the forenoon of the fifth day thereafter, and at a point about eight miles west and ten miles north of the mouth of the Stillwater, they were attacked by about forty Sioux Indians. Shively was killed, and Hyde severely wounded in the right arm. Making their way back to the Stillwater, Weaver and Hyde found at that point Henry Countryman who accompanied them up the Stillwater some fifteen miles; traveling all night the party reached the camp on that stream, the site of the present Absarokee, where the new Crow Agency was being built. Weaver proceeded to Bozeman, while Hyde remained at the Agency for medical treatment. As of August 22 it was reported from that place that Hyde was "improving," under treatment by Dr. A. J. Hunter.

The death of James Edwards and conditions at the fort were graphically told by McCormick in a letter to the editor of the Bozeman **Times**, which Elias (Blacky) Carter, traveling alone, night and day, brought to Bozeman:

Big Horn City, M. T., July 12, 1875. Mr. J. V. Bogert: ... Last night two Indians approached the stockade, and from a distance of thirty yards about 11 p. m., the guard fired upon them; and nothing more was to be seen of them.

We have been working on an island about half mile above the fort for a few days, getting out timber to build houses. So after breakfast this morning James Edwards and I started for the bluffs about a mile from the fort, to use glasses to scan the country for Indians. While crossing a little washout about 3½ feet deep near the bluffs, I saw pony tracks. ... We had no more than stopped when an Indian fired a single shot, not more than ten feet from us. Then came a volley of 30 or 40 shots.

My horse was shot in the flank, which knocked him almost down, at which time I lost my gun. The horse then became so frantic I could not manage him; he ran sideways among the Indians, when one of them shot at me so close he could have touched me with his gun. The smoke of the powder came in my face. About this time I saw rise 30 or 40 Indians. I got balanced on my horse and got him turned toward the fort. Edwards was still on his horse, and we ran fifty or sixty yards together when my horse began to buck and run sideways again, leaving Edwards to my left. The Indians were firing as rapidly as they could.

Edwards fell from his horse after being hit seven times; and, strange as it may seem, through the guidance of Almighty God—as it could have been nothing else—I got away without a mark.

My horse being hit carried me back to the fort, and as soon as I got inside the stockade he could not move. He lies now outside, dying—the ball having passed almost through his body. Poor animal! I can do nothing to relieve him. Edwards' horse ran to the fort without a rider. While we were running I could hear the balls striking him, and only waiting every shot to hit me. I had no more hope of making my escape than I have this minute of seeing the sun turn into a tin plate. I saw my only chance was to keep my horse running, and even if I did get shot he might carry me to the fort.

When I got to the fort we could see the Indians scalping Edwards. The men from the fort met me out as far as they could run on foot, but came back with me to the fort, when ten men went out and got the body, brought it to the fort where we buried it in as good shape as we could. One Indian, it is thought, was shot by Edwards with his pistol after he ran up to scalp him.

The cannon was fired, but not until after they had got too far away to hurt them. We have now only 15 guns, after what we lost coming down the river and the two the Indians got this morning. They are still around. We expect to have a fight tonight. Our ammunition is getting low. Our guard duty is so fatiguing that the men are nearly exhausted, and unless we can get some assistance from the Government we will not be able to hold out much longer. We dare not go out to kill meat—dare not go to sleep, being awakened every night by a shot and a cry of Indians.

Will you, in the name of every man in this company of pioneers, who have settled on the public domain away from any Indian reservation or titled land, beseech the military to send us assistance, or have them say they will not protect us. I wish you would telegraph Major Pease; perhaps he might be able to do something in the east. If you cannot get us military aid, ask the Governor to send us some needle guns and ammunition—say even 15 or 20 guns. The courier who carries this will bring them back by river, if he will. I will depend upon you doing something for us in this case. I think the governor will not hesitate.

We are almost out of provisions—but one side of bacon, and a little sugar and salt left. Plenty of flour, but hardly any coffee or tea. We need all these things. Hoping to hear from you by the return of this courier, I am Yours truly, Paul McCormick.

James Edwards, the deceased, had come from Sonora, Atchison county, Missouri, to Montana about six years previously, and had resided most of the time at and in the vicinity of Virginia City, where, said the **Madisonian**, he left "many friends to mourn his loss."

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J. V. Bogert got busy. McCormick's letter was published in the Bozeman **Times**. A relief expedition was initiated promptly. A boat 24 feet long and seven feet wide, appropriately named the **Rescue**, was built in town. On the morning of the 23rd of July she was put on wheels, loaded with supplies and provisions of all kinds, and started for the river landing. The following morning at seven o'clock she shoved off, in charge of B. F. Dexter, Elias Carter and nine other men.^a Upon their arrival at his place near the mouth of Shields river, Dr. A. J. Hunter furnished the party with a large skiff, to which 1000 pounds of the **Rescue's** cargo and two of the men were transferred, leaving 5000 pounds and nine men on the **Rescue**. At Pryor's creek a camp of hostile Sioux opened fire upon the party, some of the bullets striking the boat; but no serious damage was done. Near the Big Horn the **Rescue** capsized. A sack of sugar their valued salt supply, two or three guns, much ammunition and some other property were lost. Having been five days on the river, the party reached the fort at nine p. m. The cannon was fired in salute. According to one of the relief party, "the joy of the garrison was unbounded."

An Indian scare at the fort had occurred the 20th, when a band of hostiles fired from long range; but a few shots from the cannon put them to flight.

When B. F. Dexter, A. S. Hubbell, G. Woody and J. Dewing, of the rescue party set out on the night of July 31st to return to Bozeman, they left 27 men and five horses at the fort, they taking four for their trip, which required but six days. These men began immediately to prepare for another trip to the fort with more supplies. Two boats were built, and each was loaded with 2800 pounds of cargo. On the 16th of August this party

^a In the party were H. M. (Muggins) Taylor, A. S. Hubbel, Andrew (Andy) Onstadt, H. B. Potter, W. O. Gore, G. Woody, and H. Howard. Like Herendeen, Taylor became a guide, scout and messenger in the army service during the Sitting Bull campaign in 1876. Immediately after the arrival of Gibbon's command at the Custer battlefield, Taylor was sent with a news dispatch to Fort Ellis. En route he gave the news of the battle to W. H. Norton at Countryman's, or Stillwater, from which place it was sent by a courier to the *Helena Herald*. That newspaper telegraphed the same to Salt Lake City, and this, the first report of the disastrous battle, was carried in the morning papers throughout the states on July 6th. The news brought to Bismarck by the steamboat *Far West* appeared in the metropolitan press the following day. While serving as a deputy sheriff at Coulson (in the then county of Custer); Taylor was mortally wounded by Hank Lump whom he was attempting to arrest for the shooting of P. Folger, bartender at John Skillen's saloon, in the fall of 1882.

shoved off from Benson's Landing. On the boat **Confidence** were A. S. Hubbell, John Dolan and A. B. Cocks; on the other boat, the **Ed Forrest**, were G. Woody, D. J. Sweeney and J. Dewing.

For more than a month the men at the fort had not been molested by Indians; but on August 28th, a small trapping party setting out from the stockade was intercepted, a fight ensued, and the trappers were driven back. Taylor Bliven was shot through the body and seriously but not fatally injured. His assailant was killed by Brockway. That night McCormick, Lutes, Jones and McClees, traveling on foot, left the fort with mail, for Bozeman. They reached the New Agency September 3rd. There McCormick procured a horse and went on into town in advance of his companions.

To the **Times** McCormick handed a card for publication on behalf of the Fort Pease outfit, which was intended to mollify the opposition of the war and Indian departments. "We the undersigned citizens of Big Horn City, and Garrison of Fort Pease," the card read, "do not intend to visit the Black Hills or...to violate any treaty laws...We are here for the purpose of following industrial pursuits..."

Had Pease abandoned the enterprise which he had fathered? In an interview, McCormick emphatically denied the rumor. Pease had not abandoned the enterprise, he said. From the beginning, he said, it had been understood that Pease should "depart for the east for purposes connected with our plans, and one great inducement to us existed in this fact."

But probably the publication of their professed intentions did them no good. The government was just then undecided in its attitude in the Indian problem. The Black Hills matter was troublesome. The war department publicly warned people to stay out of Indian country. The people whom Pease had expected to furnish goods and capital for his enterprise had consulted the war department. "No," said the department, "goods sent there will be considered contraband, and confiscated." So his trip to the east resulted only in disappointment, and apparently Pease was never at the stockade on the frontier again. He

⁹ The signatures, here arranged alphabetically, were: J. G. Allen, James Alexander, Taylor, Bliven, B. B. Brockway, Edward Burke, Jerry Burke, Elias Carter, A. B. Cocks, J. S. Crane, M. J. Cunningham, Z. H. Daniels, J. Dewing, John Dolan, J. T. Ford, W. O. Gore, Joseph Hill, Fred Hoelin, H. Howard, A. S. Hubbell, S. D. Lutes, Tyler McClees, Paul McCormick, Duncan McRae, John McKenzie, W. C. Millikin, Kiernan Murray, J. W. Norton, A. Onstadt, Wm. Page, H. B. Potter, P. J. Sweeney, H. M. Taylor.

returned to Bozeman late in the fall, participated in a public meeting designed to take steps to stimulate immigration to eastern Montana, was appointed on the principal committee, and on December 17th again started east, with the primary purpose now of interesting capital in the Clark Fork mines in the so-called New World mining region on the head of Clark Fork.

From the time Pease left the stockade, four days after the original party arrived at the site, McCormick was the first in authority, but always a loyal defender of Pease. Interest in the enterprise continued. B. F. Dexter was now one of the leading backers. On September 11th two boats, the **Skookum** and the **Skipper Jim**, were dispatched from Benson's Landing. These were followed two days later by the **Flying Cloud** and the **Vermont**, on which were S. Malin, French Joe, George Barker, Tucker Collins and J. Amb's. Indian hostility for a time had ceased. This fact and the completion of the new Crow Agency stimulated travel to and from the fort. McCormick, accompanied by five men, with two boats built in Bozeman, left Benson's about October 8th.

But on the 10th the Sioux reappeared in the vicinity of the stockade, and Millikin, McKenzie and Gore, a lad of 17 years, had a brush with a party of fifty of them, Millikin received a flesh wound in the shoulder. Leaving 23 men in the fort a party set out five days later for Baker's Battle Ground and Bozeman. Daniels and James Gourley stopped at the former place, while Hubbell, Gore, McKenzie and Joe (Skookum Joe) Anderson proceeded to Bozeman for supplies. At Benson's Landing the latter party found E. S. Topping¹⁰ and his boat **Yellowstone Maid** loaded with 3000 pounds of specimens which he had gathered in the park during his two or three summers on Yellowstone Lake. It was his intention to take these down to Bismarek, and thence to the Centennial Exposition to be held in 1876 at Philadelphia; but he was not quite ready to start. He would have company for the down trip within a few days.

McCormick, Daniels and Carter left the fort about the 17th, on foot, for Bozeman where they planned to confer with Pease and then return to the frontier. While in town McCormick announced through the **Avant Courier** that recruits would be welcomed.

¹⁰ Author of *Chronicles of the Yellowstone*, published by the Pioneer Press, St. Paul, 1883. That work contains valuable information concerning the Fort Pease enterprise, but it is not complete nor always accurate as to dates and details.

On the 29th (October) a number of recruits left Benson's for the fort. Topping's boat **Yellowstone Maid** was the flagship of a fleet, in which were three other boats—the **Sitting Bull**, the **Red Cloud**, and the **Trader**. Hubbell was in charge of the first of these three; McKenzie commanded the second; and Joe Anderson, the third. A land party included William Smith and Ed Forrest. While at Bozeman, McCormick arranged for the publication of an advertisement of their enterprise, which appeared for several weeks in the **Avant Courier**:

YELLOWSTONE FUR COMPANY—Fort F. D. Pease, Opposite mouth of Big Horn river. We have on hand a well selected stock of goods suitable for Hunters, Trappers, and Miners. We purchase all kinds of Fur, Peltries and raw skins at the highest market prices. Parties contemplating coming to this country may rely upon finding everything needed for outfitting.

Fort Pease, November 1, 1875.

P. W. McCormick,
Newman Borchardt,¹¹ Agents.

On the 12th of November, McCormick left Bozeman for the fort, taking a stock of merchandise for the fur company. With him went 25 men. After some delay at Benson's, the party was completed and arrangements made for the down trip. About the 18th, three or four boats were launched—in charge of McCormick, Dexter and Borchardt. Altogether 29 men were in the party. On the 20th, they were followed by an overland party of eight men with horses.

The Indians again appeared. On December 1st a skirmish at the fort resulted in no serious consequences; but the next day Fred Harlan was killed, while visiting his traps about a mile from the stockade. He was well known and enjoyed a good reputation at Bozeman, said the **Avant Courier**. On the 17th Orrin F. Mason was killed, and a companion was wounded. The details were told by W. Y. Smith, writing from the new Crow Agency:

Crow Agency, M. T., Dec. 29, 1875. Editor **Courier**: On the 17th inst., about noon, Wm. Castro, Jeff Thompson and O. F. Mason were attacked by Indians about eight miles below the Little Big Horn river, while en route to Fort Pease. There were between 75 and 100 Indians. They came up in the rear of the party, and fired some shots at them before they got

¹¹ Newman Borchardt, a native of Poland, had come to Gallatin valley with Paul McCormick in 1868. He was appointed a member of the first board of commissioners of Custer county, 1877, and for some time was engaged in business at Miles City, and in the early eighties was postmaster there.

off their horses. As quick as possible they ran into a small ravine close by, got in a washout and stood them off as best they could. The Indians had them surrounded, occupying the ridges. They kept up a steady fire, but without effect; when they descended to the ravine and got in better range from the upper part of the valley.

They killed Mr. Mason, and wounded Mr. Thompson in the hand (slightly). Castro and Thompson are positive that three Indians were killed. One was shot off his horse while driving away their saddle and pack animals; two others were killed in the ravine. One of them laid within forty yards of the men. After the killing of those, they backed out, taking with them all of their animals and winter's supplies belonging to them.

The two men buried their comrade in a pit made with their butcher knives, and remained with him until dark when they left in the direction of Fort Pease, traveling at night. The next day they found themselves cut off by the Indians, when they abandoned the idea of going to the fort, and took the back track for this point which they reached yesterday.

Mr. Mason, it will be remembered, was at one time clerk of the district court at Bozeman; he was a surveyor, and during the past summer assisted H. J. Hoppy (sic., Hoppe) in the hay field at this place. He was a gentleman and highly esteemed by his acquaintances.

Signed,
W. V. Smith.

On their retreat, and before reaching the agency, Thompson and Cartro had met McCormick and eight others en route to the fort, at a point "five miles below Clark's Fork, Dec. 23," according to a communication to the Helena **Independent** from McCormick at that point, in which he stated that the Mason-Castro, Thompson party lost to the Indians nine horses, 500 pounds of flour, 150 pounds of sugar, 1500 rounds of cartridges, 15 pounds of coffee, a quantity of strychnine (used for poisoning wolf bait), 50 pounds of bacon, 10 pairs of blankets, a lodge and tent, and a complete outfit for the winter.

Ed Farnum led a small party from the agency, intending to join the outfit at the stockade, but when within eight miles of their destination, on January 2, they heard the cannon, concluded that it signified the presence of Indians, and returned to the agency. The occasion for the firing of the cannon was a battle at the fort, in which Patrick Sweeney was killed. The excitement of the occasion is apparent from a letter written by J. S. Crain two days later, to the Helena **Herald**:

Fort Pease, Jan. 4, 1876. To the Editor of the **Herald**: We have just had another fight with the Indians—the villainous Sioux. One—Pat Sweeney—we think is mortally wounded....

A party of five went out from the stockade to kill meat for the camp. They went west about three miles, killed several buffalo, and packed their horses with meat and skins. When about one mile from the stockade on their return, they were attacked by Indians in ambush. Every man in the party was wounded at the first fire... They jumped into neighboring ravine and fought... killing, it is believed, three or four Indians. . . . By Nutting was shot in the calf of the leg; James Dewing, in the arm above the elbow; Neil Gillis in the thigh; and "Muggings" Taylor in the thumb. Sweeney is in a critical condition. He was shot in the right breast, the ball ranging downward and not extracted.

The fight occurred the 2nd inst. All the men in the stockade armed themselves in a moment, and the first rifle reports had scarcely died away ere the relief party was hastening to the rescue of their comrades. The Indians broke and fled, and the fight was ended. . . . All the horses taken out by the hunting party were shot. At the time of the fight nine men were below. Two of the latter—Carter and partner have since come in. . . .

Signed,

J. S. Crain.¹³

The writer of the above letter gave it to a Crow Indian, with the request that he give it to the first white man he saw. The Crow joined a small party of warriors, who were en route to a large camp on the Musselshell. Upon reaching their camp the Crow courier handed Crain's letter to a white man who happened to be in the camp, Henry Harris of Carroll, who, on his way back to Carroll, gave it to an officer of the military at Camp Lewis, who transmitted it to its destination.

The party of trappers mentioned by Crain as being "below" included E. S. Topping, who, having changed his mind in relation to going on east, had stopped in the vicinity of the stockade, and later joined the outfit there during the winter. This party returned to the fort a few days later without having contacted the enemy. Upon the night of their return, McCormick also arrived from Bozeman with a train of goods. On the 8th, Indians attempted to stampede the horse herd near the fort, but were thwarted by the prompt resistance of the herders, John Barlow and another, assisted by the men from the fort. On or before the 16th Sweeney died from the wounds received in the fight on the second.

¹³ J. S. Crain, often written Crane, was a seasoned frontiersman. Before coming to Montana he had been in California and in Wyoming. He became one of the very first settlers on the Lower Yellowstone. Maps of Richland county show a creek and a railroad siding named for him.

Toward the close of January a party of seven men, including Joe Jessey and Negro Joe," with 13 horses, set out down the river on a hunting and trapping expedition. The weather became extremely cold, and to climax their misfortune they were attacked by Indians on the 29th, when Jessey was killed. This incident was the proverbial straw that broke the camel's back. The colonists dispatched a letter to Major James S. Brisbin, commandant at Fort Ellis, requesting military protection as citizens. "Of our colony of less than fifty men," said their letter, "five have been killed and nine wounded.... We are anxious to remain. Can you give us military protection?"

During the week of February 11-18, McCormick, Bliven and five others arrived at Bozeman. Interviewed, they said that 41 men had been left at the fort. But for the Sioux, they said, the boys would have done well during the winter in the collection of furs and robes.

IV.

Disregarding their expressed desire to remain, Major Brisbin began plans for an expedition to relieve and bring away the besieged adventurers. Necessary arrangements having been made, he set out from Fort Ellis the 22nd with four troops of the Second U. S. Cavalry, 106 soldiers, accompanied by a party of twenty civilians led by H. J. Hoppe. In camp at the mouth of the Stillwater the 27th, the command was joined by 23 citizens from the agency and 54 Crow Indians led by Chiefs Thin Belly and Good Heart. The augmented column departed down the Yellowstone valley the following morning, crossing to the north side of the river at the head of Clark Fork Bottom and going into camp at 2 p. m. at "Ball's Bend," 18 miles below the Stillwater. The next day's camp, after a march of twenty miles, was "close to Canyon creek." On March 1, as noted in the journal of a member of the expedition, they broke camp at Canyon creek at 8:20 o'clock, and at 11 o'clock "reached the gap at the lower end of the Big Bottom (at the present Billings fair grounds), ten miles; went on top of Agate Bluff to await arrival of the train.... The bluffs come close together at this point," the journalist continued; "The river leaves the southern bluffs and hugs the northern. 12 m. train arrives. We leave the bottom and ascend to a high table or bench land. Thence down the river six miles to Baker's Battleground. This is located

²² The others in the party were Carter, Crane, Ford, Onstadt, and Ed Fox.

in a narrow bottom in a bend of the river. There are two dug-outs, or underground cabins, on the bank of the river, occupied by George Herendeen and one other man. They join the expedition. We jog along for three miles and reach the lower end of this bottom and cross the Yellowstone to the south side and go into camp one mile below. . . . Traveled twenty miles."

Following the next camp, at Pompey's Pillar, the command crossed to the north side of the river. Upon approaching Fort Pease the following day, March 4, says the journalist, "The Star Spangled Banner is visible in the distance, floating gaily in the breeze." At 3:30 the command went into camp at the stockade, amid the welcoming roar of the Big Horn gun. Remaining in camp there the next day, the journalist noted: "I find four graves here, namely James Edwards, killed July 12, 1875; Fred Harlan, killed Nov. 1," 1875; Patrick Sweeney, wounded Jan. 2, died Jan. 16, 1876; Joseph Jessey, killed Jan. 29, 1876"¹⁴ It may be added that the two others killed by the Sioux had been buried where they fell: Sam Shively, near the mouth of the Stillwater, July 10, 1875; and Orrin F. Mason, on the Big Horn about eight miles below the present Hardin, December 17, 1875.

At noon, March 6th, the fort was evacuated, and that afternoon Brisbin sent a courier to Bozeman with a brief official report to be telegraphed to Gen. Phil H. Sheridan, department commander: "I found in the fort eighteen men and a negro, and have brought them away. I saw no Indians, but found five lodges of about sixty Sioux who fled south. I think they were watching the fort to pick up the men who ventured out. We start home tomorrow." The Big Horn gun was left in its usual position in one of the bastions, but Brisbin brought off all merchandise and baggage. So ended the Fort Pease enterprise.

¹⁴ This date differs from that given in the text, which is December 2.

The latter is the date given in a news item about the event in the Bozeman *Avant Courier*, December 17, 1875.

¹⁵ See *Avant Courier*, March 31, 1876.



JOHN MAGUIRE. BUTTE'S "BELASCO"

By Archie L. Clark

I

The Ralston coach from Deer Lodge rattled up the two dusty blocks of Butte's Main Street and creaked to a stop in front of Hauswirth's Hotel de Mineral. Among alighting passengers was a slim, well-dressed fellow in his middle thirties, of medium height and dignified bearing. A few loiterers on the hotel veranda almost certainly recognized him as John Maguire, an actor who had appeared, in the late sixties and early seventies, on stages of various halls and theaters from San Francisco and Portland, Oregon, to Salt Lake City and Pioche, Nevada. Those who had never laid eyes on him before were more likely to put him down as a clergyman, because of his choice of clerical-looking collars, than as the strolling entertainer he was.

John was a cousin of Tom Maguire, ex-cabdriver who had built the Jenny Lind and other early-day theaters in San Francisco. Cousin Tom's "opera house" on the Comstock was known as "the finest between Salt Lake City and the Pacific Coast"—a fair enough claim, since there were only two or three others.

Butte was enjoying its first modest boom as a silver camp when John Maguire first landed there in September, 1875. William Farlin's Travona (or Travonia) mine looked extremely promising. Prospectors who had left Butte and Silver Bow diggings after the placer claims were pretty well worked over were now returning.

Butte had only 300 inhabitants, including 15 families. A dozen or so buildings were going up—most of them one- and two-story log cabins. Eight or ten more were under construction near Farlin's mine, half a mile west of the Hauswirth hotel. There was no public hall, not even a schoolhouse (although classes had been conducted the previous winter, for six pupils, in a small log cabin).

A new store building had just been completed on Main street near the Hotel de Mineral for Foster and Ray, but merchandise had not arrived to stock it. In this "hall," Maguire gave the camp's first professional entertainment, playing three nights "to crowded houses."

His Program, Called "American Flowers and Shamrock Leaves," consisted of recitations, given in more or less appropriate costume and, perforce, in a rich County Cork brogue; also selections on the concertina. The Butte miners noisily acclaimed Maguire's recitations, which included "Shamus O'Brien," "The Battle of Fontenoy" and Poe's "The Bells."

The lone minstrel next visited Deer Lodge, Pioneer, Philipsburg and Louiseville (the last-named a long-vanished mining camp on Cedar Creek near the present-day town of Superior in Mineral county). On his return to Butte in October, Maguire gave an entertainment in King and Lowry's saloon, with music by a volunteer trio. Planks resting on empty nail kegs were the seats. Candles supplied illumination.¹

Cousin Tom's opera house in Virginia City, Nevada, was destroyed by fire early that winter. John staged a benefit for the Nevada fire sufferers at International Hall, Helena, the entertainment netting \$418. He then dug into his own pocket to add \$50 to the fund.

Deciding to remain in Montana all winter, Maguire next presented his one-man shows at the county courthouse and at Wilcox Hall, Deer Lodge; at International Hall in Helena; and at Templar's Hall, Virginia City. He also revisited Philipsburg and Pioneer. On Washington's Birthday, 1876, he appeared at the Fort Shaw Theater, as O'Callaghan in **His Last Legs**, supported by the Fort Shaw Dramatic Association. He was paid \$300 for three performances at the infantry post on Sun River.

Although he left Montana in the spring or summer of 1877 (to manage first the Willamette and later the Newmarket Theater at Portland, Oregon) Maguire returned to Butte in 1880. In the last two decades of the century he managed theaters in Anaconda, Bozeman, Butte, Deer Lodge, Missoula, Helena and Great Falls, maintaining headquarters at Butte throughout the period.

During those two decades he brought to Montana nearly all the top theatrical luminaries of the time—Sarah Bernhardt, Helena Modjeska, Charlotte Thompson, Fanny Davenport, Mme. Janauschek, Mme. Rhea, Lawrence Barrett, Nat Goodwin, Frederick Warde, Louis James, Roland Reed and scores of others. (Edwin Booth was perhaps the only top-ranking American actor of the period who did not visit Montana).

When Maguire first came to Montana Territory in 1875, he came by Missouri river steamboat after giving a performance or

¹ Guy X. Pratt, **The Story of Butte**. (Butte, 1897) 23.

two at Nebraska City. He stopped at Fort Abraham Lincoln on his up-river trip, to entertain the gentlemen and ladies of the frontier cavalry post, a year before the Battle of the Little Big Horn. He carried in his bag a letter of recommendation from Gen. George Armstrong Custer. (The original is in the archives of the Historical Society of Montana).

When news of the fate of Custer reached him the following summer, Maguire wrote a eulogy that was widely reprinted throughout the West. It was natural, then, when he returned to Montana from the Pacific Coast in 1880, that he should visit Fort Custer, the new cavalry post at the junction of the Big Horn and Little Big Horn rivers, the largest cavalry post in the United States up to that time.

Like Fort Shaw, Fort Custer had a dramatic society, with officers and enlisted men in its membership. Since the fort was on land adjoining the Crow Indian reservation, Maguire decided to put on John Brougham's burlesque, **Pocahontas**, using real Indians in the cast. Chief Plenty Coups and a band of braves were encamped on the Little Big Horn, below the fort; Maguire readily induced the Indians to take part in the performance.

That night every man whose duty did not require him to be elsewhere was in the theater. Everything went smoothly until the scene where Pocahontas is pleading for the life of Captain John Smith (played by Maguire). At that point a Crow medicine man rushed into the theater and shouted something to the Indians on stage. Every Indian, whether on-stage or in the wings, ran out of the theater.

An Army scout translated the medicine man's message, a band of Piegans from northern Montana had just raided the Crow camp and had ridden away with all the Crow ponies.

This was an affront the Crows, known as "the best horse-thieves on the plains," could not brook. It also was a challenge to the cavalymen of Fort Custer. Maguire's performance of **Pocahontas**—with real redskins—ended there.

Another Maguire anecdote dates from the same summer. John, as we have said, affected a clerical-looking collar—the same type of neckwear that later became the trademark of David Belasco. (Some authorities say Belasco copied it from Maguire when both toured the Northwest with the same company in the late seventies). He also carried himself with considerable dignity. (The surest way of winning his esteem was to tell him he resembled Lawrence Barrett, which he did).

Traveling by stagecoach across eastern Montana, he stopped one noon at a stage-station whose dining-room was conducted by an Irishwoman who mistook him for a priest. She immediately killed a couple of her fattest pullets. While the rest of the passengers ate bacon and beans, Maguire feasted on fried chicken.

When the time came to pay, the Irishwoman said to Maguire: "Not one cent from your riverence!"

The next day the stagecoach driver told the woman of her mistake. When Maguire returned that way a day or two later, he was ravenous. He had purposely eaten a light breakfast, the better to enjoy the delicacies he felt sure were waiting for him at the Irishwoman's table. Instead of a courteous welcome, he was met by a tirade:

"Out of me house you black divil of a play-actor, she shouted. "Divil a bit ye can get here for love nor money.""

II

Montana's finest theater in territorial days was the Ming Opera House at Helena.² This playhouse was opened September 2, 1880, by the Hasenwinkle Dramatic Co., with Kathie Putnam as a star. Maguire was soon installed as manager of the Ming.

Ming's Opera House, named for John H. Ming, the pioneer merchant who financed its building, was Helena's fourth theater. The first was Leviathan Hall on Bridge (Now State) street; the second, the Wood Street theater; and the third, the Langrishe Opera House, on South Main street. The last-named house was destroyed in the fire of 1874 and for six years following performances were given by various troupes in International Hall and Harmonia Hall. This last-named house was remodeled and known for a season or two, before the opening of Ming's, as Sawtelle's Theater.

During this period when Helena lacked a real theater, Butte amusement-seekers also packed into makeshift halls for dramatic entertainment. "Yankee" Plummer and an occasional minstrel troupe appeared at Loeber's Hall and later, Owsley Hall, both on the east side of Main street between Park street and Broadway.

In the summer of 1881, Robert Renshaw built a large brick building on Butte's West Park street, "Opposite the school-house," with a good-sized hall on the second floor. (The building, much remodeled, still stands on the southwest corner of Park and Dakota streets). This hall, dedicated on Washington's Birthday, 1882, with the Firemen's Ball, soon became known as the Ren-

² The Butte Miner, February 1, 1888.

³ Now the Consistory Temple, extensively remodeled.

shaw Opera House, John Maguire, manager. To this "theater" came such celebrities as Nellie Boyd, "by private conveyance;" the Haverly Dramatic Co.; Henry Ward Beecher; George Crichton Miln and Louis Jordan (who as Louise Jordan Miln later won world-wide fame as author of "Mr. Wu" and other stories set in China). Maguire also brought to Butte and Helena his idol, Lawrence Barrett.

Barrett came to Montana in the summer of 1883, playing five nights at the Renshaw. The newly-completed Utah and Northern ran excursions from Deer Lodge, Anaconda and Dillon. Barrett appeared in **Hamlet**, **Richelieu**, **Francesca da Rimini**, **Yorick's Love** and **Julius Caesar**. The company included Marie Wainwright and Louis James. Tickets sold for \$2.50—a record for the time and place.

III

Silver was king in Butte until 1883 and, in fact, the camp was known as "the Silver City" for several years after Marcus Daly opened the rich copper deposits that have earned the Butte hill the right to be termed "richest hill on earth."

Maguire fanned interest of some of Butte's leading citizens in the idea of building a real theater. A corporation was formed with James A. Murray, mining magnate (and uncle of Montana's present senior senator), as president. John H. Curtis, real estate dealer, was named treasurer, and Green Majors, son of Alexander Majors of Pony Express fame, secretary.

Among those who took shares in the company were William Andrews Clark, Marcus Daly, J. Ross Clark, Lee Mantle, Fred Gamer, King and Lowry, Patrick J. Hamilton and John Noyes.

The site chosen for Maguire's Grand Opera House was on Broadway in the first block west of Main. Excavation was started in the summer of 1884. H. W. Barbour, designer of the Tabor Opera House in Leadville, was engaged as architect. The building, of red brick facing and two stories tall, was unimpressive from the street; but inside was a neat and comfortable little theater with 182 orchestra seats, 280 seats in the "orchestra circle," and 300 more in the parquet or "family circle." There were four boxes, two on each side of the proscenium.

Maguire's Opera House was opened in July, 1885, by the Wallack Theater Company of New York. Maguire paid Charles Frohman, the company manager, \$6,000 for a three-night engagement. The play chosen for the opening was Henry Guy Carleton's **Victor Durand**. Settings for this piece, as well as all

scenery in the theater loft, were painted by Edgar S. Paxson who later became one of Montana's best-known artists.

Many distinguished players, operatic stars and concert artists appeared on the stage of this, Butte's first real playhouse.

IV

At 8:10 on the evening of July 24, 1888—almost three years to the day after the opening of Maguire's—members of Odele Payne's **Wages of Sin** company were donning makeup and costumes in their dressing rooms. About 60 persons were in orchestra seats and half as many in the family circle. Maguire was in front of the house.

It was a warm, midsummer evening and the windows backstage were open. A tongue of flame shot out from a defective gas jet in the third border. A puff of wind came through one of the open windows and blew the flame against some flimsy scenery. Instantly long tongues of fire were licking at the wings and toward the flies.

Maguire, summoned by an excited stagehand, ran backstage to turn on the overhead sprinkling system. It failed to work. Those in the auditorium smelled smoke and left in orderly fashion by the front entrance. Actors ran into the alley in costume. The rear of the theater soon was a sheet of angry flame. Within an hour the building was a pile of smoking embers.

Three days later Maguire transferred scenery from his Deer Lodge theater and converted the Pavilion Skating Rink, at Granite and Alaska streets, into a makeshift playhouse.

A week after the fire about 25 of Butte's leading citizens met at Lee Mantle's offices and planned a huge benefit for Maguire. Abe Heyman presided. The benefit was to be held at the racetrack on Saturday afternoon, August 4. On the evening before the affair, tickets were auctioned in front of Heyman's store (on the present site of the Hirbour building). William Andrews Clark, M. J. Connell, A. J. Davis, Curtis and Majors and Sheriff Lloyd paid \$100 each for tickets. Leyson and Turek, jewelers, who had bought \$100 worth of tickets, took an additional \$50 worth.

On the afternoon of the benefit, the racetrack was jammed. Work was suspended in all the mines. The newly-constructed street railway had hastily extended its rails to the racetrack. Music was provided by the Boston and Montana, the Walkerville and the Emmett Guard bands. The orchestra from the Theatre Comique, a variety hall, played for the various acts. There were foot races and horse races, exhibitions of Indian club swinging

by Morgan Evans, a greased-pig race and a tug-of-war. An ox was barbecued. Bobby Gaylor, then appearing at the Comique, gave his most popular monologues. (Years later Gaylor was starred in a Broadway play under management of William A. Brady).

Professor LeRoy's feats on the tightrope ended the "monster" program, as the press of the time labeled it. The affair was reported in newspapers from Great Falls to Virginia City, Nevada. Total amount raised by the benefit never was announced publicly, but it certainly reached five figures.

Stockholders of the "opera house" found \$9,600 in the treasury and in September, J. M. Wood, who had designed the Burbank Theater in Los Angeles, was called into consultation with J. S. Chevigny, Butte architect. In the spring of 1889, Maguire was installed as manager of a still finer theater than the one destroyed by fire.

The new Maguire's opened February 28, 1889, with Rose Osborne in **A Celebrated Case**. Sol Smith Russell followed, then Frederick Warde, Effie Ellsler, Maggie Mitchell, James O'Neill, Clara Morris, Lotta, Sarah Bernhardt, Alexander Salvini, Fanny Davenport, Minnie Maddern (not yet Mrs. Fiske); in short, just about everybody of note in the world of the theater except Eleanora Duse and Edwin Booth.

In 1896 and '97, Maguire's was designated "the Murray Opera House" on billboards and playbills. This was in gratitude for financial aid given to Maguire by James A. Murray. But the theater-loving people of Butte never referred to the playhouse by any other name than "Maguire's," and in 1889 the old name was restored officially.

In 1898 another theatrical manager appeared on the scene. He was Richard Perry Sutton, a native of Kentucky with a circus background. He came to Butte at the head of a touring **Uncle Tom's Cabin** troupe. He converted Caplice Hall at Park and Montana streets into a theater, first called the Union Family. Later the "Union" was dropped from the title.

When Butte's Variety halls were forced to close by city ordinance which outlawed the sale of beer and liquors in a place of theatrical entertainment, Sutton converted the old Comique (on Main just south of Park) into a vaudeville theater. Later he showed the first motion pictures to goggle-eyed Butte audiences in this house. Still later, Sutton joined with John Cort of Seattle

and Calvin Heilig of Portland to form the Northwest Theatrical Association, affiliate of the nationwide "syndicate."

Maguire could cope with neither Sutton nor the combine. He had no taste for the "ten-twenty-thirty" type of stock company Sutton introduced. Sutton soon found capital to build a fine, large theater on Broadway at Montana street, a block and a half west of Maguire's Grand Opera House. This house, called the Broadway, was opened September 29, 1901, with **The Belle of New York**. (It is now, in 1951, a motion-picture theater, the Montana.)

On May 9, 1902, Maguire transferred the lease on his opera house (he had never owned either of the Butte houses) to J. P. Howe of Seattle and retired from the scene. For a short time he managed the Margaret Theater at Anaconda. Then he went to Salt Lake City to join the editorial staff of the Salt Lake **Tribune**.

In 1907 Maguire went to Monterey, California, where James A. Murray had a palatial winter home. Murray placed the old trouper, the manager who thought "the best was none too good" for Montana audiences, as associate editor of the Monterey **Daily Cypress**. Within a few weeks, John Maguire was dead.

If you should visit Monterey, you will find his last resting place without difficulty. Drive in the main gate of San Carlos Cemetery. About 75 yards inside the gate, on the east side of the driveway, you will see a huge rough-hewn block of Montana granite. The face of the stone bears a miniature replica of the proscenium arch at Maguire's Grand Opera House. The curtains are parted. Above the arch are carved these words:

"Ring down the drop—

Life's fitful play is o'er."

PERRY W. McADOW AND MONTANA

In 1861-1862

INTRODUCTION

Perry W. McAdow was the son of Samuel and Julia (Bean) McAdow. He was born at Maysville, Mason County, Kentucky, in 1838 and died eighty years later at Punta Gorda, Florida.

The account of his adventures which follows was written to W. S. Bell, librarian of the Historical Society in 1908, from Punta Gorda. McAdow is writing forty-seven years after the events in question but while there may be minor errors, the account holds up well where it can be checked with other evidence.

There weren't many people in Montana ninety years ago and McAdow seems to have encountered most of the "residents." In any event, here is an early account of Montana, and a good one.

Editor.

In the month of April, 1861, Maj. William Graham¹ and myself fitted out for a voyage up the Missouri to visit our old friend Maj. John Owen² who at that time was agent for the Flat Head Indians and lived in the Bitter Root Valley.

At St. Joseph, Mo., we boarded the good steamer "Spread Eagle," commanded by Capt. L'Barge,³ and piloted by Bill Massey, bound for Fort Union, a trading post on the Missouri near the mouth of the Yellowstone River. Among its many pas-

¹ William Graham was born in New York City in 1815. He was a '49er and came to Montana in 1861 as a trader and miner. He was a member of the Council of Montana Territory in 1876. He died at Philipsburg in 1878. See *Helena Herald*, January 17, 1876 and *New Northwest* (Deerlodge) March 1, 1878.

² John Owen established himself as a trader in the Bitter Root valley in 1850. His career in the region continued until 1877 and for twenty years he was one of the outstanding pioneer figures in Montana. Between the years 1851 and 1864 he made thirty-four journeys throughout the Northwest. He covered, in the aggregate, an estimated twenty-three thousand miles. He built Fort Owen which became the rallying point, hundreds of miles from any other white settlement, for nearly every white man in the country. Owen represented the government for six critical years in dealing with the Indians. Like Factor John McLoughlin or Sutter he "dispensed his hospitality with the manner of a medieval baron to all who came his way." He died in Philadelphia in 1889. For an excellent sketch of his life see S. Dunbar and P. C. Phillips (eds). *The Journals and Letters of Major John Owen...1850-1870*, 2 vols. (Portland, Maine, 1927) I, 1-19.

³ John L'Barge.

sengers we found Chas. Chouteau,⁴ Maj. Andy Dawson,⁵ Capt. Clark⁶ who was afterwards killed by the Pagan (sic) Indians on the Prickly Pear, Chas. Lemon,⁷ Al Clark of St. Louis, Capt. John Brown of Kentucky,⁸ Frank Worden,⁹ Col. Fisk¹⁰ and Mr. Fuqua, the two latter being on their way to Oregon. Besides these were an old English gentleman with his wife and niece, three

⁴ The Chouteau family played a prominent part in the development of the fur trade in the Upper Missouri valley. Auguste was sent by the Louisiana Fur Company to aid in the construction of a fort near the mouth of the Missouri in 1763. This fort subsequently grew into the city of St. Louis. Auguste's brother Pierre was prominent in the early fur trade along with Auguste and the name of Chouteau was long a passport commanding hospitality among the western Indians. Pierre Jr. was born in St. Louis in 1789. In 1834 he and his partners purchased the interest of John Jacob Astor in the American Fur Company. Charles P. Chouteau, his son, was born in 1819. When Pierre, Jr., died in 1865, Charles took over supervision of the company in Montana until the holdings were sold in about 1866. He then returned to St. Louis where he died in 1901.

⁵ Andrew Dawson was born in 1817 at Dalkeith, Scotland. He arrived at St. Louis by way of New Orleans in 1843. In 1854 he came to Fort Benton and took charge of the fort during Culbertson's frequent absences. In 1865 he returned to Scotland where he died in 1871.

⁶ Malcolm Clarke was born in 1817 at Fort Wayne, Indiana. He was next in command to Culbertson at Fort Benton from 1850 to 1853. He located on his ranch at the mouth of Little Prickly Pear Canyon in 1864-65 where he was killed by a Piegan Indian in 1867.⁶⁹

⁷ Of Charles Lemon no record, apparently, exists. It is possible that he was some kin to Robert Lemon, partner of Charles Larpenteur in the fur trade. See *Helena Herald*, April 27, 1872.

⁸ John Mason Brown, grandfather of the present John Mason Brown, dramatic critic and author, was born in 1837 in Frankfort, Kentucky. He was a graduate of Yale and practiced law for a time in St. Louis. In 1861 he journeyed up the Missouri on the *Spread Eagle*, spent some time among the Blackfoot Indians, prospected a little and, after crossing over to Walla Walla, returned to the east to join the Union army as a colonel. He subsequently practiced law in Kentucky and was a candidate for Kentucky's Supreme Court when he died in 1889.

⁹ Francis L. Worden was born in Vermont in 1830. He came to Missoula County in 1860 to open a trading and mercantile business in partnership with Christopher P. Higgins. They established a trading post at Hell Gate Ronde, some four miles west of present Missoula. Upon the discovery of gold at Gold Creek, they established a store at that place. In 1863 they opened another store at La Barge City, Cottonwood, or what is now Deer Lodge. Their headquarters, however, shortly became Missoula and both men were intimately associated with the growth of that city. Worden died in Missoula in 1887.

¹⁰ If McAdow here refers to James Liberty Fisk, Captain, U. S. A., he errs in putting Fisk in the company. At least no record presently available indicates that Fisk was in Montana prior to the expedition which reached Fort Benton on September 5, 1862. There is a record of Fisk having joined the Minnesota Volunteers in September, 1861, as a private. He was commissioned a Captain in May, 1862. Either McAdow here refers to another Fisk, which is unlikely, or his memory served him poorly at this point.

young "bloods" from New York, by the names of Cheflin, Seamon, and Carey who were making a pleasure trip to the mountains.

We all soon became acquainted and entered into games of amusement for whiling away the hours of the long journey. Draw Poker was the chief diversion among these amusements.

The river was very low and the Capt. and Pilot were kept busy hunting water to float the boat until we met the June Rise. After that we had no more trouble. Plenty of Buffalo, elk and deer were in easy shooting distance along the banks of the river, and we lived high on fresh meat. The trip was uneventful until we reached Fort Union where we transferred to the Steamer "Chippewa" which ran from there to Fort Benton.

On the 21st day of June, the day after leaving Fort Union, one of the deck-hands went into the hold with a lantern, searching for whisky and unfortunately for us he tapped a barrel of alcohol which took fire and exploded, filling the hold with flames. The Capt. saw that it would be impossible to check the fire, and as there was a large quantity of powder in the cargo, he put us ashore as soon as possible; running on to a sand-bank he held the boat there until all were safely landed. The steamer was then turned adrift, the strong current carrying her across to the opposite bank where she hung until the fire reached the gunpowder, the terrific explosion tearing the boat and cargo to pieces, except for a few barrels of whisky that came out whole and these were taken possession of by the Indians. We built fires and camped on the banks of the river spending the night in devising ways and means by which to get away from that part of the country. When the sun rose in the morning it shed its rays on a most forlorn set of pilgrims. Fort McKenzie, a small trading-post, was about five miles up the river. Maj. Dawson sent some men up there to see if they might not get some boats, and this they succeeded in doing, and the batteau and yawl which they obtained were large enough to accommodate all of the passengers and crew that desired to return to Fort Union. Maj. Graham, Col. Fisk, Capt. Brown, Mr. Fuqua, Frank Worden and I concluded to proceed on our journey. At Fort McKenzie we found two yoke of oxen and an old wagon which we pur-

chased, and then hired Jim Chambers¹¹ to guide us through to Fort Benton. We had to depend on our rifles for provisions and we were shy on bedding, but by keeping up a good fire during the night we were able to get along fairly well. Our course lay up the Milk River over the route that the Great Northern R. R. now takes.

It was a wild and wierd looking country containing but little game. For ten days we ploded (sic) along, arriving at the fort on the 4th of July. There we met John Powell,¹² Fred Burr,¹³ Louis Simmons,¹⁴ and several other mountain men who had come in to meet the boat and get supplies.

We enjoyed a fine dinner of buffalo-calf and felt some better. After resting a few days we went on to Sun River and at the home of Col. Vaughn¹⁵ who was agent for the Piegan Indians, we enjoyed all that that hospitable gentleman could devise for our comfort. The Col. was a whole-souled genial gentleman of the old school and pioneers were fond of listening to his many interesting stories, one of which was "The pedigree of the Durham Bull." He took the world easy and seemed

¹¹ James H. Chambers, a "mystery man of the fur trade" in Montana, is mentioned in no account save the Harkness Diary which places him at Dauphin post in 1862. The St. Louis directory of 1847 lists a James Chambers as "riverman" and the directory of 1848 has a James Chambers as "bookbinder." The St. Louis ledgers of the Chouteau Company list James Chambers as having a balance of \$308.90. See note on Chambers in Historical Society of Montana Contributions, Vol. X, 270-71.

¹² John W. Powell was born in Virginia about 1832. He came to Montana in 1856. He lived with a Bannock Indian woman who bore him five children. He lived in the Deer Lodge valley and is often mentioned in Stuart's *Forty Years on the Frontier*. He was shot and killed by one Rhoeder, May 7, 1879.

¹³ Fred Burr is mentioned in the *Owen Journals*, op. cit., 68, on July 15, 1854. He was an engineer with Mullan's surveying party. He later settled in the Bitter Root and for several years traded along Emigrant Road. Later still he became a miner in the Deer Lodge Valley. He left Montana for Canada in 1868 and died in the late 90's in Washington, D. C.

¹⁴ Louis Simmons emerges momentarily into the light of Montana history in this single sentence from Granville Stuart's account: "We were soon joined by a middle aged trapper named Louis Simmons and a young Snake Indian boy named Tabbabo." The date was September, 1860. See P. C. Phillips (ed) *Forty Years on the Frontier as Seen in the Journals... of Granville Stuart*, 2 vols. (Cleveland, 1925) I. 154.

¹⁵ Alfred J. Vaughn was born in Virginia in 1801. He entered the Indian service in 1842, was agent at the Osage agency in 1845 and sub-agent for Iowas, Sacs and Fox, 1848-49. He established the Blackfoot Agency at Sun River and held that position until 1861. He married an Indian woman who bore him a girl, Fanny, who was baptized by Father de Smet in 1864 on board the steamer *Yellowstone*. Vaughn died in Mississippi in 1871.

perfectly satisfied with the provisions of nature. While living on Beaver Creek near Helena, he had a magnificent garden of green vegetables. One day a horde of grasshoppers swooped down on his vegetables and when they left there was nothing to mark the event but some dead stalks. The old gentleman viewed the remains with complacency and quietly remarked "The Lord giveth and the Lord taketh away. Blessed be the name of the Lord."

After a satisfying rest we at last had to bid the Col. good-by, and we proceeded on our journey. After crossing the Dearborn River we traveled on to the Prickly Pear, up which stream we traveled for twelve miles where we crossed and then proceeding to a low divide before us, we dropped down over that and camped on the banks of Silver Creek.

The valley along this stream was full of game, the most plentiful being buffalo, elk, deer and antelope. Capt. Brown and I went hunting over the ground where Helena now stands, succeeding in getting a good supply of fresh meat. We then crossed the Rocky Mountains finding fine camping grounds on the Little Blackfoot River, and then we feasted royally on fresh fish, the stream being fairly alive with the speckled beauties. After proceeding down the Blackfoot and Hell Gates Rivers we came to the mouth of Gold Creek where James and Granville Stuart,¹⁸ John Powell,

¹⁸ James and Granville Stuart were born in Virginia, the former in 1832, the latter in 1834. They spent their boyhood in Muscatine County, Iowa. In 1852, James and Granville accompanied their father to California. Here they prospected and herded stock. In the Spring of 1857 the Stuart brothers traveled overland from the Sacramento valley to the Beaver Head Valley where they spent the winter of 1857-58. In the spring they moved over into the Deer Lodge valley. In June, 1858 they traveled to Fort Bridger, then to Fort Floyd, some forty miles south of Salt Lake City. In July they moved to the Green River country and wintered on Henry's fork of the Green river. During all this sojourning they trapped, traded with the emigrants, bought and sold cattle and prospected. In the fall of 1860 they moved back into the Beaver Head valley, then on to Deer Lodge where they located at the mouth of Gold Creek. They found good gold prospects, but the steam boat *Chippewa* which was bringing their equipment up to Fort Benton burned (see McAdow's account) and delayed their exploitation of the promising Gold Creek area until the following year.

James Stuart died on October 30, 1873. Granville lived until October 2, 1918, having been closely associated with the growth of Montana for sixty-one years. He left a very fine account of frontier Montana to posterity in his journals and reminisces. See Phillips (ed) *op. cit.*

Fred Burr, James Minesinger¹⁷ and Tom Adams¹⁸ had built some cabins and were living, seemingly contented and happy. Continuing down the Hellgate we reached the location of the genial Capt. Higgins,¹⁹ (sic) so well liked by all the old pioneers. At this point we came to the parting of the ways; Col. Fisk, Capt. Brown, Frank Worden and Mr. Fuqua went on to Walla Walla, while Maj. Graham and myself went up the Bitter Root valley to Fort Owen. When we arrived there we found Maj. Owen absent but we were made welcome and comfortable by Tom Harris,²⁰ Dr.

¹⁷ James Madison Minesinger is listed in the Missoula County census of 1870 as being 38 years of age, born in Tennessee. He had a half-breed wife, Nellie, and four children. He died in Calgary, Canada, in May, 1894.

¹⁸ Thomas Adams arrived at Gold Creek in 1857. He is mentioned in the **Owen Journal** on Friday the thirteenth, October 1854 as being in the "Skar Ka Ho (Skalkaho). He had come into Montana with the Northern Pacific survey of 1853 and was later attached to Mullan's party. Shortly, however, he left this service and settled in the Bitter Root valley. In 1854 Governor Stevens appointed him special Indian agent, which position he held for one year. In 1857 he became a miner and trader at Gold Creek. For many years subsequent to this he was a prominent citizen.

¹⁹ Christopher P. Higgins was born in 1830 in Ireland. He came to the United States in 1848, enlisted in the army and served five years in the dragoons. In 1853 he joined the Stevens survey party. He was commissioned a captain in 1855 and served two years at Walla Walla as agent for the government. In 1860 he bought Mr. Isaac's interest in the firm of Worden and Isaacs at Walla Walla. Shortly thereafter he came to Hell Gate (see note 9). In 1865 he located the townsite of Missoula where he did business until his death in 1889.

²⁰ Thomas W. Harris was born in Kentucky in 1827. He came over the Oregon Trail to Fort Hall about 1851. Here he entered the employ of Major Owen with whom he was associated for many years. He became a rancher on Three Mile Creek, north of Fort Owen, in 1863 or 1864. He was also one of the first county commissioners of Missoula County. Harris kept a diary for many years (original in the Historical Society Library, Helena) which contains many references to Major Owen and affairs at the Fort. He died at Stevensville in 1897.

Atkinson," and DeLacy," and Caleb Irvine " and it surely was a haven of rest for our weary bodies after our long and tedious journey of four months.

In October Maj. Owens returned from Portland, bringing with him L. L. Blake and his brother Stearney." Having heard that gold colors had been found in the sands of Gold Creek, which did not receive this name until later, Stearney Blake and I concluded to go up there and do some prospecting. We dug holes in several dry gulches, the bed-rock being three to four feet deep. We found good prospects, as much as ten cents to the pan, which we regarded as encouraging. It was now the middle of December and old Boreas was beginning to shake his scepter. The freezing of the ground compelled us to wait until Spring to continue our prospecting.

²¹ Dr. Monroe Atkinson is mentioned in the S. R. Bond diary, the official journal of the Fisk expedition of 1862, as follows: "Met Dr. Monroe Atkinson, from Penn. at Fort Benton, has traveled long among the Indians, 16 yrs." (see micro-film copy of diary, Historical Society Library). Atkinson is mentioned in the Owen Journal, (Vol. I, 176) as being at Fort Owen and being "an old California miner." This was in July, 1875. He is mentioned in *Stuart's Journal*, (Vol. I, 206) as being an "inventerate prospector but never digs nor pans only looks for likely prospects with a pair of field glasses." These sparse references are the only mark left by Atkinson.

²² Walter W. DeLacy was born in Virginia in 1819. He graduated from Mount St. Mary's Catholic College in 1838. He subsequently went to West Point to study topographical and mathematical drawing. He later taught French at West Point and was commissioned a Captain.

In 1858 DeLacy, now a Colonel, joined Captain John Mullan at Fort Benton to become an engineer for Mullan's expedition. He remained with Mullan until 1862 and then went to Bannack. During the winter of 1864-'65 he was employed by the First Legislative Assembly of Montana Territory to make a map of Montana for the purpose of laying off counties. This was the famous "DeLacy map" which was afterwards lithographed and sold in the east and which appeared in several editions in Colton's Atlas. DeLacy died in Helena in 1892.

²³ Caleb E. Irvine was born in Tennessee in 1825. He served in the Mexican war as a mounted rifleman. In 1849 he crossed the continent from Fort Leavenworth to Oregon City, Oregon, following the Oregon trail. In 1851 he resigned from the army and, in company with Major Owen, came to the Bitter Root valley where he made his headquarters at Fort Owen until 1862. In the fall of 1863 he joined the gold rush to Alder gulch. He spent the summer of '64 prospecting on Mill Creek, above Sheridan, and in 1865 was in Bannack. He died in Anaconda in 1891.

²⁴ Abraham Sterne Blake and his brother, L. L. Blake came to Montana in 1861 and settled in the Bitter Root valley. Sterne was a representative of Missoula County at the first and second sessions of the State Legislature. He died in Victor in 1907.

We moved our camp down to the mouth of Gold Creek and while there, Chief Tendoy²⁸ who was camped at the mouth of the Little Blackfoot, with his band of Bannocks, sent down a runner to John Powell with a challenge of a shooting-match. These Indians were hunters of small game and could easily do us up unless we could prevail on them to shoot at long range.

James Stuart had in his possession a Henry rifle which was about the first breech-loading long range gun brought into that part of the country. As Powell could speak the language of the Bannocks, he went to their camp to arrange details of the match. The target was to be placed at a distance of 100 yards, and to be moved one hundred yards for each succeeding shot until 1000 yards had been reached. This arrangement being entirely satisfactory to the Indians we felt confident of the simple and cheap way we had devised of adding to our herd of ponies and buffalo robes for these would be put up for stakes.

Early in the morning we rounded up our horses and collected all the blankets, beads, and butcher knives we could scrape together and started for the Indian camp. Arriving on the grounds we found Chief Tendoy ready for business. He had selected one of his men named Pushigan to do the shooting. This Indian had an old-fashioned Dimmock rifle, weighing about thirty pounds. He had taken a piece of hoop-iron and improvised a sight by slightly turning up the end in which he filed a notch, this contrivance being fastened to the gun-barrel with buckskin thongs. and by means of a small wooden wedge he could raise and lower the sight to suit his fancy. Johnny Grant²⁹ had built some cabins at this spot and was living there with his family of breeds. For a

²⁸ Tendoy, Chief of a band of mixed Bannock, Shoshone and Turkuarika Indians making their headquarters in Idaho's Lemhi valley, was known for his friendly attitude toward whites. Tendoy was able to improve the condition of the valley and a few of his followers by his sagacity in trade with settlers and the mining camps in Montana which he visited frequently. He died on the Lemhi reservation in 1907.

²⁹ John Francis Grant was born in Canada in 1832. He got his early schooling in Quebec. In 1847 he traveled south to Fort Hall and came into Montana in 1857. He married several Indian women. In fact, it is maintained that when he lived on the Little Blackfoot river, seven Indian tribes used the trail that went past his home and he had a wife from each tribe. In any event, he had nine children, five boys and four girls. When he returned to Canada in 1868 he married Clotilda Bruneau, daughter of a Judge, and from this union seven additional children were born—making a grand total of sixteen offspring.

In the Deer Lodge valley Johnny Grant raised cattle and children and did a fine business with settlers and emigrants. By 1862 he had 500 head of cattle. In 1867 he sold his cattle to Con Kohrs for \$19,000 odd dollars and returned to Canada, Montana having become too crowded. He died in Edmonton in 1907.

target we took the end-gate of his wagon-bed, a board three feet square, and in the center of this we made a bull's-eye, on paper. Pushigan fired the first shot and struck the bull's-eye near the center. We had selected Granville Stuart for our marksman. He stepped up to the scratch and took deliberate aim; with the crack of the gun the dust flew up away beyond the target. He had missed the board, which was not very encouraging considering the close proximity of the mark. As the match progressed, up to five hundred yards we had not made a single score, but at six hundred yards Granville managed to strike the board near the bull's-eye. Up to this point we had been making very light bets, but now confidence was restored with a whoop and betting ran high. Powell began wagernig two horses to one, but alas for our hopes. Pushigan began to more carefully manipulate his hoop-iron sight and up to nine hundred yards we had but one score to our credit. By this time our crowd was "flat broke," with not a pony, blanket or butcher-knife left, James Stuart bantered Chief Tendoy to bet one horse against his long-range rifle, but after carefully examining the gun, the wily old chief handed it back with the simple remark, "Cultus," which meant "No good." We had to foot it back to camp, arriving late in the evening, tired and hungry, much sadder and wiser men than when we started out so gayly in the morning.

Blake and I returned to Fort Owen to spend the winter. The snow fell very deep in January, being from three to four feet on the level, which kept us close indoors for some time, but the Maj. had an abundance of provisions and plenty of Hudson Bay rum, which he and Maj. Graham gave full appreciation to. I spent the greater part of that time straightening up Maj. Owen's books and accounts, and reading in his excellent library.

On the first of April 1862, the Chinook winds came sweeping over the mountains and the snow soon disappeared. Stearney Blake and I formed a partnership and went down to Higgins (sic) and Worden's store on the Hellgate to outfit for further explorations on Gold Creek. While there we heard a most amusing trial over a suit brought by Tin-cup Joe against Baron O'Keefe²⁷ for shooting his horse. The trial was held in Boltie's saloon, as that was the only room large enough for the purpose. Mr. Brooks²⁸

²⁷ Cornelius C. O'Keefe. For another version of this trial see "Another Version of Montana's First Civil Suit" in this issue.

²⁸ Henry Brooks came into the Bitter Root in 1855. He was the first Justice of the Peace of Missoula County. He was killed in Blackfoot City in 1866.

was Justice of the Peace and Bob Pelky²⁰ was Constable. A jury of twelve men good and true was empanelled and the charge as presented by Frank Woody,²¹ attorney for the plaintiff, was malicious destruction of property and cruelty to animals. The Baron defended his own case, denied the charge of maliciousness and claimed that he shot the horse in self-defense. This animal would break into his enclosure and lead in a band of horses that ate up his hay that he wished to save for his own stock.

He had notified Tin-cup Joe several times of the trespassing of his animal but he always received the information as if he were well satisfied with it.

After the witnesses had given in their evidence, attorney Woody arose and with blazing eyes set forth the terrible consequences and demoralization that would follow among the settlers of such depravity were allowed to go unpunished. The great tide of emigration that was expected to populate Montana's beautiful valleys would turn back, in fear of the desperate law-breakers whose fame would be abroad.

The Baron's moment arrived, he rose with blood in his eye, and directing his remarks to the bench began, "Say old Brooks, who in hell made you Judge?" His Honor explained to the angry Baron that he held his commission under the Governor of the Territory of Washington.

The fiery Baron continued, "You're a fraud, you're no judge, you're nothing but a squaw-man living with two squaws at the present time. You (and Frank Woody) are a disgrace to the community and should be driven out. You belong to the same class as the Pea-soup French who are populating this part of the country with half-breeds." (Woody would not stand for this smirch on his reputation and advanced on O'Keefe with a chair.) Instantly a fight was on, jury, witnesses, judge and by-standers all taking part. After a rough and tumble time of it for some minutes Mr. Boltie managed to make himself heard and restored order and the trial proceeded. In giving his charge to the jury the judge said, "Gentlemen, you will quietly proceed to the shanty

²⁰ Robert A. Pelky arrived in Hell Gate in August, 1861. He died in Spokane in 1906.

²¹ Frank H. Woody was born in North Carolina in 1833. In 1853 he moved to Indiana and thence, in 1856 to Utah. In the fall of 1856 he joined a party heading north to trade with the Flathead Indians and in October he arrived at the present site of Missoula. Here he settled and in subsequent years he freighted, mined, sold merchandise and engaged in politics. From 1866 until 1880 he was in the office of the Missoula County Clerk and Recorder. He was also probate judge. He was admitted to the bar in 1877. He died in Missoula in 1916.

behind Higgins (sic) and Worden's store, and after carefully examining the evidence in this case you are ordered to bring in a verdict for the plaintiff."

Thereupon the Baron invited the jury to a sociable drink, but it had but little effect on the verdict for in a few minutes they returned to the saloon with a decision rendered as per instructions of the Judge. The defendant was fined \$10 and costs and thus ended the first court trial ever held in what is now the state of Montana.

When the snow had melted sufficiently to enable us to travel, we packed up our outfit and started for the "diggings."

On arriving at Gold Creek we found the same old crowd there, the Stuarts, Burr, Powell, Adams and Minesinger taking things easy and like Mr. McCawber "waiting for something to turn up."

We secured a whip-saw and went up the gulch to the spot where we had found prospects of gold in December. We sawed out enough lumber to make three sluice-boxes, placed them in position and began operations. Some deep snowdrifts still remained and these furnished us with water for several days which we used to the best advantage for when it gave out and we cleaned up we found that we had one and a quarter ounces of pure gulch gold and this was the first gold taken out in the present state of Montana."

We were now satisfied that gold might be found there in paying quantities and on a small stream flowing into Gold Creek we sunk a six-foot hole to bedrock and found good prospects. This gulch was afterward named "Pioneer" by Capt. Mullen (sic) who at that time was building a government road through the mountains. We worked our claim that summer and were fairly successful for green miners.

"Who actually took out the "first" gold in Montana is a question still in dispute. It is possible that Father de Smet knew of the existence of gold in Montana. The first recorded notice, however, appears in John Owen's diary for February, 1852. "Sunday, 15—Gold Hunting found some." Also in 1852, Samuel M. Caldwell found traces of gold on Mill Creek, west of Fort Owen. However, "Benetsee" or Francois Finlay seems to be the first person who actually found a significant amount of gold—and this in 1852 on what later was known as Gold Creek. Finlay, however, told only Angus McDonald of Fort Connah of his discovery. The latter was fearful lest a gold rush destroy the fur trade and kept the matter secret. In the spring of 1858 James and Granville Stuart found gold at Gold Creek. In view of the fact that Finlay did not dig for gold and had no interest in prospecting, it is probable that the Stuart's prospecting activities in 1858 and the gold they unearthed represents the first actual and effective discovery in Montana.

Steam boats arrived at Fort Benton in July (sic, June) bringing a number of pilgrims from St. Louis, among these being Judge Dance,²² Sam Hauser,²³ Drew Underwood,²⁴ Sub Walton, Al Clark, and Dr. McKellops.²⁵ Jack Mendenhall²⁶ and Bob Mennifee²⁷ came up from Salt Lake. Con Kohrs,²⁸ Dr. Glick,²⁹ John Boze-

²² Walter B. Dance was born in Delaware in 1820. As a youth he set out for St. Louis. In 1862 he came to Montana and joined the Stuart brothers at Gold Creek. When gold was struck in Alder Gulch, Dance, Stuart and Company established a mercantile house there and remained until 1866 when they transferred their business to Deer Lodge. Dance represented Deer Lodge county repeatedly in the Legislature, once as presiding officer of the Council. He died in Butte in 1878.

²³ Samuel T. Hauser was born in Kentucky in 1833. In 1854 he removed to Missouri where he was employed by different railroad companies as a civil engineer. In 1862 he came up the Missouri to Fort Benton and from 1862 until his death in Helena in 1914 he was a man of great influence in Montana. As banker, miner, and engineer and as one of the "Big Four" in the Democratic party much of the growth and development of Montana is encompassed in his activities. He was governor of Montana Territory from 1885 to 1887.

²⁴ Drewyer Underwood came to Montana in 1862. He, along with Hauser, was one of the organizers of the illfated "Yellowstone Expedition of '63" organized to search for gold in that area. Underwood died in Kansas City, Missouri in 1891.

²⁵ Dr. H. J. McKellops emerges somewhat obliquely and very briefly in the history of Montana. On August 5, 1862 James Stuart had a tooth pulled by McKellops. See Phillips, (ed) *Forty Years...* (Vol. I, 216). If "firsts" were particularly important in history, we might debate whether or not this is a record of the "first" tooth pulled in Montana.

²⁶ John S. Mendenhall was born in Indiana in 1835. In 1855 he removed to Kansas and then, in 1857, to California. He returned by steamer to New York and then came west again to Salt Lake. In 1862 he arrived in Montana to sell goods in Bannack. He prospected in 1862 around Virginia City and the following year went to British Columbia. He returned to Montana in 1864 and settled down on a farm in the Gallatin valley. He died in Bozeman in 1896.

²⁷ Robert P. Menefee was born in Missouri in 1833, went to Kansas at the age of 22, to Utah in 1858 and arrived in Montana in 1862. In 1867 he took some land in the Gallatin valley and settled down to farming. He died in 1906.

²⁸ Conrad Kohrs was born in Holstein, Germany, in 1835. At the age of 15 he went to sea as a seaman and for several years sailed from New York to South American ports. After locating in Iowa he engaged in rafting and steamboating on the Mississippi. He was also in the meat business. In 1856 he went to California by the Panama route, tried farming, but in 1858 gave it up to prospect in the Fraser river district. He returned to California the following year and then came to Montana in 1862. In 1866 he bought the livestock of Johnny Grant (see note 25) and settled down near Deer Lodge. From that time for upwards of half a century his chief business was ranching and livestock. He was long known as the "cattle king of Montana." He died in Helena in 1920.

²⁹ John S. Glick was born in Ohio in 1833. In 1858 he went to Kansas, but shortly thereafter removed to St. Louis to enter Dr. McDowell's medical college from which he obtained an M.D. In 1862 he went to Colorado and in 1863 to Montana. He practiced in Bannack for a year, Virginia City, then Blackfoot City. He then established himself in Helena which was his home until his death in 1880.

man," and many others came through from Colorado.

Grasshopper Gulch, where now stands the city of Bannock, was struck that Fall. Emigrants began to come in principally from Missouri, and were dubbed by the late Col. Sanders "as "the left wing of Pap Price's army."

I spent thirty-one years of my life in the northwest in what was first known as the Territory of Washington, then divided and called the Territory of Idaho, and with the next division the Territory of Montana was formed which in time became a State.

In 1889 as a member of the Constitutional Convention I helped to launch the new State. Almost all of the old pioneers have crossed The Great Divide, and of the little band of six pilgrims that footed it over the mountains in 1861, I am the only one left. I am now living in Punta Gorda, Florida, in an ideal home located on the shores of Charlotte Harbor. The salt waters of the Gulf lap the beach within eighty feet of my veranda. Palms, orange trees and four hundred varieties of tropical shrubs and vines, fruit and blossom the year around, making my environment idyllic.

Many of the old timers of Montana have drifted down to this charming State as have I and have built ideal homes for themselves where they may prolong their lives many years by avoiding the extreme and sudden changes of climate that Northerners must always suffer from.

"John M. Bozeman was born in 1837 in Georgia. In 1860 he went to Colorado in search of gold. In Colorado he accepted the invitation of the Stuart brothers to search for gold in Montana. He was not successful as a miner, however, and soon turned his attention to "trail building." The opening of the Idaho and Montana mines had caused a strong stream of migration to the north which created the need for a direct overland path to the mines. Such the Bozeman trail was supposed to become. The story of Bozeman's activities is fully yet concisely told in Merrill G. Burlingame, "John M. Bozeman, Montana Trailmaker," *Mississippi Valley Historical Review*, March, 1941, 1-28. Bozeman was killed by Blackfoot Indians in 1867.

"Wilbur Fisk Sanders was born in New York in 1834. He moved to Ohio in 1854 to study law with his uncle, Sidney Edgerton. In 1861 he joined the Union Army but ill health brought him an honorable discharge in 1862. In 1863 he came to Montana and settled in Bannack. Sanders was a Vigilante. He was a Republican and was long influential in politics in the territory and state. He died in 1905.



ANOTHER VERSION OF MONTANA'S FIRST CIVIL SUIT

By Howard Toole

INTRODUCTION

The story about Cornelius C. O'Keefe related in the foregoing reminiscences of McAdow is one with several variations. O'Keefe, who settled at the mouth of the Coriakan Defile just west of Missoula in 1859 was, it is true, a contentious character and it is doubtless true that he was the object of the territory's first civil suit. But the details vary. That O'Keefe or the "Baron" as he called himself, was an intemperate man is beyond doubt, but it is possible, at least, that his sense of outrage over Tin Cup Joe's accusation had some basis in Joe's activities. This will be seen in the following account.

The "Baron" was a member of Montana's first territorial legislature, which body he called "parliament," and until a few years ago there were those who could recall seeing the Irishman astride his horse, in formal dress, on his way to the legislature. He was wont to shout to passers-by "Out of me way! I'm on me way to parliament!"

What scanty correspondence the "Baron" left to posterity is something of a study in invective. For example "Shanahan," he wrote to Martin Maginnis in 1874, "is a sneaking, low, contemptible rogue. No word of honor, no pluck or no fight in him. He is a miserable, lying creature. He says he is a cousin of Cavanaugh's. He lies. He'd have more man in him if he had any Cavanaugh blood in him." Having thus blasted Shanahan, the Baron remarked: "Ivrybody want me to go to parliament again but I won't as it is a loosing game." Perhaps to one of the Baron's intransigence it was, indeed, a "loosing" game.

The following account of the trial was told to Howard Toole, of Missoula, by David O'Keefe, the Baron's brother. Dave was a witness at the trial. As accounts go, this one is as reliable as McAdow's, though all that can safely be said historically is that the territory's first civil suit was attended by some untoward incidents.

Editor.

David O'Keefe was present as a witness in the case, and his version of the story is as follows:

Tin-cup Joe, with his Indian wife, called at the O'Keefe ranch one day in the early sixties and asked to be permitted to stay over night. The O'Keefe brothers readily consented, but advised Joe that they were about to leave the ranch to call on Captain Mullan whom they thought was camped some place near the

mouth of the Blackfoot. The O'Keefe's had raised a crop of oats the previous season and were treasuring some seed oats which they expected to plant as soon as the season should come around. They told Tin-cup Joe not to permit his horse to get into the oats, and then set out for Captain Mullan's camp. However, they found Captain Mullan at Hellgate very much nearer the ranch than they expected to find him and after a brief conference returned to the ranch to find Joe's horse contentedly consuming their oats. With quick Irish resentment the Baron drove the horse out of the oat bin and the animal fell into a partially excavated root cellar and died before he could be released. David O'Keefe always contended that no pitchfork was used upon the horse, not because the Baron had any scruples against so using a pitchfork, but for the simple reason that there was not such a thing in that part of the territory at that time.

At any rate Tin-cup Joe and his squaw moved on afoot to Hellgate and there told their grievances to Frank Woody. It was determined by Woody and other citizens that the Baron should be prosecuted in a civil action for damages, and after selecting Brooks (I think it was Brooks) as Judge, a summons was issued in some form or other and the Baron was called upon to defend himself in a civil action.

The case came up for trial and Judge Woody represented the plaintiff. The Baron appeared in his own behalf.

Up to this point in the tale the various versions of the various histories more or less agree, with the exception of the part the pitchfork played, but I have never heard any explanation of the fact that the trial suddenly resolved itself into a free for all fight. There was no uncertainty however, in Dave O'Keefe's mind as to the cause for the rumpus, and he has often told me that when court convened and the case had been outlined Baron O'Keefe stepped up to the bench and demanded, in rich Irish oratory, to be advised by the judge upon what authority he set himself up as a duly constituted judge of a court in the territory. Upon being asked for his credentials by the Baron, the judge reached into his pocket and produced a deck of cards. These he spread out across the table, stating to the Baron in the meantime that these were his credentials.

The judge then turned upon the Baron with equal belligerency and demanded that he be advised upon what authority the Baron appeared in a duly constituted court of law and assumed to act as counsel for himself therein. He was asked what school he had graduated from and what credentials he had to offer.

The Baron, not to be outdone, said to the judge, "Do you want to see my credentials?" and, when the judge replied "I do," the Baron struck him between the two eyes with all his force, saying: "These are my credentials."

It followed quite naturally that the dispute over the credentials became general and a free for all fight ensued.

The judge and jury fled the court room, but later returned and rendered a verdict and entered judgment against the Baron for \$40.00; but, in the absence of a sheriff with sufficient energy and "credentials" by whom process could be executed, no effort was ever made to collect the judgment from the Baron, and Tin-cup Joe no doubt still has the \$40.00 coming.





Reverting to the old cowhands' roundup held last summer near Glasgow, there have been many changes in the shallow valley of the Milk River since those lords of the lariat rode the wide open range. Former pastures and sod-roofed ranch houses have been replaced by irrigated farm units and more modern if less picturesque homes. Excowtowns whose streets now echo to the jingle of spur chains only at rodeo time, have been gentled under the refining influence of plow and farmers' co-ops. Old timers miss Long Henry's place with its masculine brass rail and the solo game in the rear.

Honkytonk, harness shop, livery stable and Chink restaurant have relinquished their locations to movie palace, dime store, filling station, and drive-in. Implement dealers purvey tractors, harrows and manure spreaders as signs of the times and stark elevators stand guard down by the tracks while the streamlined Empire Builder whizzes by. On the rippling benchland, north and south, alternate green and dun stripes of strip farming stretch to the horizon. Perhaps it is progress though it would have been hard to make the patriarchs of the powwow believe it.

Pioneers are a laconic breed. Even when they loosen up among friends their conversation is to the point, such as "Here's how" or "I'll raise you." But at the Nelson-David horse-camp meeting they really waxed loquacious. Memory crowded on the heels of memory as wistful eyes sparkled or

misted to their telling. Why doesn't some able, sympathetic recorder get these authentic firsthand tales of cowland on paper, film or tape before it is too late?

* * *

When Ross Toole spoke at the M. I. A. Festival banquet in Virginia City last June, he emphasized the a b c caches where historical treasure might be found....attics, barns, cellars. With permission of the Lockey estate heirs, the staff of the Historical Society recently explored the basement of the Lockey Building in Helena. They hit a pay streak....fifteen cases of papers, pamphlets, pictures, ledgers, letters and books representing the type of record that meticulous Richard Lockey, Sr., would keep.

Mr. Lockey came to Montana Territory from Iowa in 1866 and the material covers his wide range of interests from that date up to the 1920's. It includes a diary of his trip west and a complete set of original maps of various additions to the city of Helena. Incidentally names of many Montana pioneers were given to the subdivisions and to their streets and avenues. Rodney Street is named for the first person to die in Helena. He was a doctor, Rodney Pococke.

Additions were platted, beginning as early as 1872. Some extended far to the north, east and west of present city limits because in those days an ambitious citizenry visualized a second Denver spreading across the Prickly Pear Valley. Richard Lockey was one of the large owners of Helena real estate. He held it with an abiding confidence in Helena's future long after—perhaps too long after—those of lesser faith had permitted their property to go for taxes. Now, in a modest but substantial way, those dreams of residential and business expansion are materializing.

* * *

Old mining camps have been productive sources of historical records this past year. Before the gold bug beat the free silver exponents at the polls in 1896, the rumble of ore wagons and the thunder of stamp mills could be heard all through the mountains of Montana. From A for Argenta to Z for Zortman, gold and silver quartz camps have flourished. Emblematic of her mineral wealth, Montana sent a solid sterling silver statue to the Columbian Exposition at Chicago in 1893. Regal Ada Rehan, famous stage beauty of the day, posed for the figure. It was valued at \$100,000 and stood on a gold base allegedly worth \$225,000.

There are sceptics mean enough to intimate that both statue and base may have been plated.

Be that as it may, Montana's precious metal production was dazzling. Confidence in every surface showing ran high. Steam boilers, hoists and mill equipment were freighted into the hills over abominable roads, often before exploration and development work had justified the optimism of the promoters. Then the silver market went to pot, though gold was prized in the quaint old fashioned way for other things than dental inlays and wedding rings. The idea of digging it up to re-bury it hadn't been evolved.

Gray boards, rusty iron, and mineral stained mine dumps remain as mementoes of those days when every prospector was a potential Croesus and every prospect was a possible Golconda. In ghost camps bleary boarding houses and musty cabins sag and leak. Their dull windows stare hopelessly at brushgrown trails that once were active avenues of commerce. They have a fascination for those who can people their invirons with salty characters of bygone days and recreate times that were virile and sometimes turbulent.

Last summer the Butte history section of M. I. A. made exploration of nearby ghost camps its project. Most notable find was the all but abandoned camp of Hecla high up in Trapper Gulch of the Pioneer Mountains south of Butte. There are forty odd buildings and some of them yielded valuable records. Salvaged and sorted by writer Marian Place of Butte, they have been gratefully received by the Historical Society.

Appropos of Mildred Walker Shemm's article on Natawista in this issue, a brief biographical sketch of Alexander Culbertson, written by Mrs. Anna McDonnall for Vol. X, Contributions to the Montana Historical Society, started action that located the grave of the redoubtable Missouri River fur trader in Orleans, Nebraska. Charles E. Hanson, Jr., founder of the Museum Association of the American Frontier at Loomis, Neb., tells the story in the June, 1951, quarterly issue of the Nebraska State Historical Society.

Inspired by Mrs. McDonnell's sketch Mr. Hanson began a painstaking search. He enlisted the efforts of other Nebraskans and finally determined that Major Culbertson died, aged 70, at the home of his daughter, Julia Culbertson Roberts, in Orleans, Nebraska. He was "first buried in the 'old cemetery' one-half mile east of Orleans and had been disinterred and reburied in

the new Orleans cemetery some twenty-five years later." Through cooperation of the Republican Valley Chapter of the Daughters of the American Revolution and the Nebraska State Historical Society the forgotten grave has been identified by a marker placed May 30th, 1951.

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November 8th, 1951 was the 62nd anniversary of Montana's admission to the Union as the 41st state. By proclamation, Governor Bonner designated it as Montana Day and expressed the hope that it might be recognized and suitably celebrated each year. It wouldn't do any of us a bit of harm to pause at least once a year to take stock of our state heritage and perhaps to "view with alarm" what is happening to it.

Down near Cooke City, Montana is an unnamed pass. Mr. W. K. Cadman of Wichita, Kansas, has petitioned the United States Board on Geographic Names to name it Colter Pass. Heated argument sometimes develops as to just where the peripatetic Mister Colter made tracks during his spectacular career as a mountain man. But Mr. Cadman is a student of John Colter's life and if he is convinced that Colter passed that way that pass is good enough for us. If Captain Bonneville deserves a dam, a prehistoric lake, and a public power administration, it would be small potatoes to begrudge rugged John Colter a pass.

When Lewis and Clark reached the Mandan villages on their return trip from the west coast in 1806, young John Colter asked for and received an honorable discharge from the expedition so that he might join two trappers, Dickson and Hancock, in a projected enterprise in the Yellowstone country. He cheerfully relinquished his opportunity to return to the settlements after an absence of over two years. The following year (1807), Manuel Lisa, first trader to lead an American fur brigade into Montana, met John Colter at the mouth of the Platte curving down the Missouri alone in a canoe. Colter didn't require much urging to join Lisa and again blithely pointed his moccasins toward the fascinating country of the Roche Jaune or Yellowstone.

While Lisa was erecting the first whiteman's edifice in Montana, a crude trading post at the mouth of the Big Horn River, he sent Colter on a lone mission to find the roving Crow Indians and apprise them that the blessings of commerce were scratching at their tepee doors. Solitary John betook himself to the unknown hinterland south and west of the fort and

succeeded in finding at least a semblance of the future Yellowstone National Park. Skeptics were to scoff at his yarns of boiling, spouting hot springs and stinking fumaroles. They deemed it a mythical limbo which they facetiously dubbed Colter's Hell.

With such a background it is no wonder that incredible John Colter should later turn up at the three forks of the Missouri and there make his famous escape from the Blackfeet.

• • •

The Veterans-Pioneer Memorial Building is progressing satisfactorily. In terms of physical plant nothing west of the Mississippi can rival it. Furniture has been ordered and the Yuhas Millwork Company of Helena will soon construct the first diorama case for the museum. Paul Ferryman, artist for the Fish and Game Commission, is working out plans for the first unit, an historical wild life display. Eventually dioramas and models of mining, transportation, lumbering, Indian life, fur trade, cattle industry and other subjects will be included. The museum will not be exclusively diorama but it will be predominately so. Art work, sculpturing, painting and model making will be needed. Montana has competent artists to do it but it must be done within the scope of an over-all, integrated museum plan.

Shortly after the first of the year Dr. J. C. Ewers, Associate curator of the Smithsonian Institute will arrive in Helena. He will plan the museum from scratch. Dr. Ewers did the Plains Indian Museum at Browning and since then has attained national recognition as an ethnologist and museum expert. He is one of the country's best and we are fortunate to get him, especially because of his former Montana background.

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The American Association for State and Local History awarded a certificate of merit to the Montana Institute of the Arts. The presentation was made by K. Ross Toole, director of the Historical Society, at a meeting of the Bozeman M. I. A. group on October 29th, 1951.



BOOK REVIEWS

THE NORTH AMERICAN BUFFALO, by Frank Gilbert Roe. (University of Toronto Press, 1951) 957 pp. All of the North American buffalo are in this excellent book. It is a thorough, well organized presentation of the lore of the buffalo: its habitat, its physical characteristics, its relation to the Indians, to the ecology of the Great Plains, to the immigrant white man, and finally the destruction of the great beast of the plains.

The book also contains an extremely large and valuable collection of statements made by the more important observers and writers on the subject. To these statements the author applies his subtitle: "A Critical Study of the Species in its Wild State." Every aspect of the buffalo as portrayed by these "authoritative" statements is approached with the point of view that "There is one method only of ascertaining whether this conception is a sound one or not, and that is by an examination of the available evidence."

The author admits that he may be accused of "petty cavilling over points of detail." He approaches that, certainly, and often with almost physical violence in an effort to sift evidence and arrive at a scientifically established conclusion. W. T. Hornaday, long regarded as one of the authorities on the buffalo is given credit for his valuable contribution, but is also caustically dismembered on many pages. Says Mr. Roe, "Hornaday's besetting sin is an unscientific propensity to elaborate a too broad and comprehensive thesis from insufficient material."

The writer is constructive in setting forth his own conclusions on the several controversial aspects such as the total numbers of the animals, the question of different species, and the northern limits of the range. On two questions he summarizes material published over a period of years: What is the relation between the buffalo trails and highways? Very little. Was there a distinct north-south migration of the buffalo? Only within restricted limits in search of suitable range, and not because of weather conditions, maintains the author.

The study is a long one, consisting of 679 pages of narrative material, heavily footnoted, followed by 35 special appendix items. A bibliography of over a thousand items is one of the most complete listings in print, made additionally valuable since many of the items are critically evaluated in the volume. A

thorough index and skillful printing rounds out a highly satisfactory book.

The account is remarkable in its completeness and its careful evaluation since it is the leisure time activity of a locomotive engineer who had little formal training for this type of work. The length and contentious treatment of extensive source material takes it out of the general reader classification, although the forthright treatment lends zest and keeps interest high steadily. It is the most complete and most closely reasoned book on the buffalo which has yet been written and narrows and clarifies perceptibly the work which remains to be done in this field.

Merrill G. Burlingame.

Montana State College.

MUDDY WATERS: THE ARMY ENGINEERS AND THE NATION'S RIVERS, by Arthur Maass. (Harvard University Press, 1951) 306 pp.

Here is a book for administrators of public and private affairs on local, state, and national levels. It sets forth criteria by which to measure responsible action by an agency, especially a public department or bureau.

The measure of an administrative agency as a responsible instrument of government includes, among others, the following: (1) acceptance of direct responsibility to the chief executive; (2) and through him, indirectly, to the legislature; (3) recognition that it must operate independently of the organization and policies of political parties; and (4) adherence to professional standards.

In Chapter I, the author develops seven of these criteria. In the succeeding chapters, of which there are four, he tests the actions, policies, and programs of the Army Engineers in the light of these criteria. There is also a discussion of the growth and arrest of a national water policy, especially as a multi-purpose resource development tool. The author points out that the struggle to develop an acceptable national water policy, hemmed in by pressure group activity, started with Theodore Roosevelt, came to the fore again in Hoover's administration, and became especially pressing during the Franklin D. Roosevelt and Harry Truman administrations.

The Army Engineers have been notorious for violating or subverting most of these criteria of responsible government agency administration. The chief exception appears to be that they have maintained the professional standards of the engineer.

This evaluation of the Corps is thoroughly and accurately developed and documented by the author. It is further supported by a forward to the book written by Harld L. Ickes who was in a position to know the practices of the Army Engineers. He describes the Corps as "the most powerful and most persuasive lobby in Washington." He goes on to say "when Herbert Hoover was in the White House, the Corps of Engineers casually brushed him aside, although he himself was a member of their profession. . . . Specific and direct orders from President Roosevelt were disregarded with a casualness that was not pretended. In his turn, President Truman has tried to impress upon the Corps . . . that he is . . . the Commander in Chief. . . . But, so far, the Army Engineers have successfully defied him."

The author points out that advances have been made in an acceptable water policy for the Nation, but that agencies, including especially the Engineers, have "in no way kept pace with the increasing complexities of multi-purpose river-basin development. . . . Since 1936, however, the Engineer Department has become increasingly involved in very complex operations . . . 'a seamless web: The unity of land and water and men.' The Corps has failed to grow to the task."

This book is also for the lay reader. The only way to insure responsible public administration is for the lay citizen to know the facts and to elect governmental representatives who will insist on legislation that will make this possible. In the Missouri Basin where the Engineers, the Reclamation Service, the Federal Power Commission, the Inter-Agency Committees, and Bonneville, to mention only a few agencies, will continue to operate, responsible administration is a prime necessity. It is not a matter of doing without them, but to get the best out of them.

Finally, for Montanans who have carried the torch for breaking the reclamation procedures of the past, it will be interesting to know that such torch bearing falls into the category of "carrying water" for the Army Engineers. The proof for this is in Chapter 5 which is a description of the King's River Project in the Basin of the Great Central Valley in California.

Carl F. Kraenzel.

Montana State College.

FROM THE QUARRIES OF LAST CHANCE GULCH, by William C. Campbell (Helena: The Montana Record Publishing Co., 1951), illustrated, 251 pp.

An accurate preview appears on the title page: A "News-History" of Helena and its Masonic Lodges, compiled from the files of Helena newspapers... plus some personal research... covering the 25-year period in Helena's history from the discovery of gold in 1864 to the coming of statehood to Montana in 1889.

There is an introduction by Norman B. Holter, who was born in Helena in 1868 and still resides in the city of his birth. The prologue consists of an interview given to a newspaper in 1884 by Reginald (Bob) Stanley, one of the four prospectors who made the discovery of gold in the gulch.

This is a welcome contribution to the history of Montana's capital city, and, so far as this reviewer knows, is the first published volume devoted to the subject. The author's material is concisely presented, in chronological order, a chapter to each of the twenty-five years; but do not conclude that it is merely a bare catalog or schedule of dates and events, for it is in fact a panorama of living people and their community.

Numerous sites of importance in the 1860's and 1870's are identified in relation to the Helena of today. Especially valuable are the forty or more illustrations.

As implied by the sub-title, the activities of the Masonic lodges are purposely given more attention, proportionately, than could be justified in a formal history of Helena. The absence of an index is regrettable.

Mr. Holter states in the introduction that he believes the book "presents an unusually clear picture of the first quarter century in Helena" and that "Whether they are members of the Masonic fraternity or not, I would commend the reading of the book to all those interested in Helena's glorious past." This reviewer heartily endorses both these comments.

Clyde McLemore.

Helena.

RUSSELL PORTFOLIO; Seven Drawings by Charles M. Russell with an Additional Drawing by Tom Lea, (all reproduced in the original size) and an essay on these pictures, "The Conservatism of Charles M. Russell" by J. Frank Dobie. This 22" x 15½" portfolio was brought together by Carl Hertzog at El Paso, Texas.

Russell prints are often too highly colored and are usually on cheap paper. These large reproductions are beautifully done on fine paper and they are not Russells from which a large num-

ber of prints have been made. They are, of course, entirely suitable for framing. The price for the portfolio is high, twenty-five dollars, but to a Russell devotee it is well worth it.

J. Frank Dobie's essay makes one wish that Dobie would do a life of Russell. It is true that Mr. Dobie is primarily a Southwesterner, but anyone familiar with his **Guide to Life and Literature of the Southwest**, or, for that matter, any of his other works, would admit the extent of the knowledge he has of, and the feeling he has for, the wide open spaces. His sympathy for Russell's "Conservatism" is clearly drawn in this Russell essay. In a few pages he shows a great deal more understanding of Russell and what made him tick than the recent biographers of Russell show in an entire volume.

Perhaps "conservative" is too mild a word for Russell's sentiments, but Dobie lets him speak for himself. On one occasion Nancy got him to speak before a "booster meeting." The toastmaster introduced him as a pioneer. Said Russell: "I have been called a pioneer. In my book a pioneer is a man who comes to a virgin country, traps off all the fur, kills off all the wild meat, cuts down all the trees, grazes off all the grass, plows the roots up, and strings ten million miles of bob wire. A pioneer destroys things and calls it civilization. I wish to God that this country was just like it was when I first saw it and that none of you folks were here at all."

He ended a string of verse he wrote to Robert Vaughn:

Here's to hell with the booster,
The land is no longer free,
The worst old timer I ever knew
Looks dam good to me.

But as Dobie points out, Russell's devotion to the old times and old ways did not come from his own age; it was congenital. And it is reflected in his pictures far more effective than in his words—not that his words lacked pungency! He called the automatic rifle a "God-damned diarrhea gun." He called the white man, "nature's enemy." He vowed that "the land hog is the only known animal that lives without a heart." He called automobiles "skunk wagons," yet he really meant no offense to the skunk. "Invention," he wrote to a friend, "has made it easy for mankind but it has made him no better. Machinery has no branes."

"His art," writes Dobie, "can be comprehended only through an understanding of his conservatism. It was not the conservatism of the privileged who resent change because it will take

away their privileges. It was the conservatism of love and loyalty."

Texas has taken a lot of Russell paintings from Montana. Let her make amends through Mr. Dobie and give us a biography of Russell.

Henry Platt.

Helena.

FISH LANE, by Louis Corkill. (The Bobbs-Merrill Company, Indianapolis) 220 pp.

This book is a fresh, new mystery novel by a previously unpublished Montana author. Many readers who ordinarily pass up the murder story will read this one for its unusual characterization and background. On the west shore of Lake Matthews (apparently somewhere north of Butte) lives in abandoned summer cabins an assortment of odd characters. All are on the verge of starvation; their relief checks eked out by chicken stealing, illegal hunting or trapping. Across the lake in solitary grandeur lives Jerome Porter, a worthless idler with plenty of money. Obviously Porter is a natural for the part of murder victim, and each of the Fish Laners on the west shore has the best of reasons for killing him. The residents of Fish Lane are sharply drawn, believable people. They are independent, rough, vivid, and for the most part, grimy. Action centers about the widow Simms and her two daughters; the Widow's young son, Dolly (for Dalton), is an idiot whose intelligence is keener in the dark hours. Dolly is one of the few idiot characters in fiction. Here in Mr. Corkill's novel Dolly is well rounded, believable, and by no means unattractive. His loyalty to the decent members of the family brings the murderer to justice, with excellent assists by Deputy Sheriff Art Lenore.

Our established Montana authors will welcome this newcomer to their ranks. Mr. Corkill stands on his own feet, asking for no special consideration, although **Fish Lane** was written on four hundred sheets of Braille. Like his fellow townsman Hector Cheigny, he makes his sighted readers tip their hats to him.

Norman Winestine.

Helena.

MEET TOM COONEY, by Mildred Houghton Comfort. (The Lund Press, Inc., Minneapolis, 1946) 164 pp.

In this slight volume the author has presented the life of Tom Cooney in autobiographical form. Mr. Cooney came to Minnesota from England in 1859 at the age of six; he grew up on a farm near Afton, Minnesota, in the pioneer days of the state; specialized

in engineering at Minnesota University when there were only two buildings on the campus; homesteaded in the Red River Valley in the 1870's; surveyed for the Northern Pacific Railroad as far West as Deer Lodge in the early 1880's; spent the winter in 1885 timber cruising in the Upper St. Croix Valley and the winter of 1886 working with a Great Northern surveying party along the Milk River; laid out bridges and worked as a mineral man for the latter railroad in the 1880's and the 1890's; invested and lost money in the Diamond Hill Gold mine on Indian Creek about eight miles west of Townsend, Montana; served as Lieutenant of the United States Army in the Spanish American War; and after the war served as a land agent for the Northern Pacific Railroad for nineteen years.

This autobiographical account, however, gives little space to those last nineteen years. It concentrates on incidents in Mr. Cooney's early life and career. These add interesting and valuable detail to our picture of pioneer days in the Northwest but their chief merit lies in demonstrating that the life of the early day engineer was as rugged and as necessary to the development of the country as that of the pioneer rancher and homesteader. The historical literature of the West has recognized the importance of the coming of the railroads but too often has neglected to give credit to the men who built those railroads. The long hours worked and the discomforts experienced by the surveying parties, as matter-of-factly described by Mr. Cooney, bear comparison with similar conditions on the ranches of the period. The winter of 1886-87 was as grim to the Great Northern field engineer on the Milk River, sleeping in a tent and short of food, as it was to the cowboy who attempted to ride the range.

The book is written in a simple and straightforward style with no attempt at padding and little attempt at embellishment. Mr. Cooney had a keen interest in nature and observations on wild life are introduced sparingly throughout the narrative. He also had a well developed philosophy of life, fitting to a man who had lived through the "colorful and varied" days of the pioneer, and this philosophy is passed on, likewise sparingly, to the reader.

In one of the later chapters of the book Mr. Cooney's opinions on dry farming in Montana are set forth; and in the same chapter, as has happened all too rarely in books about Montana, the importance of coal in the economic development of the state is recognized.

Marguerita McDonald.

Montana State College.

CONTRIBUTORS

Mildred Walker Schemm of Great Falls wrote her first novel, **Fireweed**, in 1934. The novel was awarded the Avery Hopwood Award by the University of Michigan. Since 1934, she has turned out a number of novels including **Winter Wheat, Unless the Wind Turns, Light From Arcturus, The Southwest Corner, The Brewer's Big Horse** and **The Quarry**. Mrs Schemm is a graduate of Wells College where she studied under Robert P. Tristram Coffin. She subsequently took her MA in English Literature at the University of Michigan.

Clyde McLemore, a graduate in law at the University of Missouri, a former resident of Baker, now a resident of Helena, is the author or editor of some fifty articles on early Montana history. Readers of **Frontier and Midland** will particularly remember his contributions to that magazine.

Archie Clark, special correspondent for the Great Falls **Tribune** has a wide familiarity with early Montana history. His special field, however, is the early theater in regard to which he has done research all over the United States.

